

A

Christian Library:

CONSISTING OF

EXTRACTS from and ABRIDGMENTS of

THE

CHOICEST PIECES

OF

Practical Divinity,

Which have been publish'd in the

ENGLISH TONGUE.

IN FIFTY VOLUMES.

By *JOHN WESLEY*, M. A.

Late FELLOW of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.

VOL. XXXIII.

BRISTOL:

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MDCCLIII.

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A

GOSPEL-GLASS:

OR, A

CALL from HEAVEN

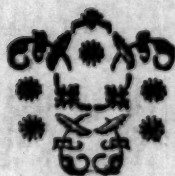
TO

SINNERS and SAINTS,

BY

REPENTANCE and REFORMATION,

To prepare to meet G O D,



THE

GOSPEL-CLASS:

OF A

CALL FROM HEAVEN



PRINTED

BY

REPENTANCE AND REFORMATION

To prepare to meet G. O. D.



THE



THE PREFACE.

I FIND Men will easily subscribe to this, That Sin is the procuring Cause of all Misery; but I find an Aptness to transfer the Guilt from one to another, from one Party to another; and yet though People do even sell themselves to work Wickedness, yet so predominant is Self-Love, that it sees no Spots in itself. Ahab is not the Troubler of Israel, but Elijah: Nay, a good Man, Aaron excuseth himself, and lays the Blame on others. The Sin is theirs, not mine. Men have a natural Desire to justify themselves, and their Desire is so strong, that they care not who they burden, so they may but ease and acquit themselves.

And indeed, Sin is such an ugly Monster, that no Man will own it, if he can chuse; but had rather lay this Child of Darkness, at any

THE PREFACE.

Man's Door, yea at GOD's, than Father it himself.

My Design in this Enterprize, is, to obviate this Distemper, and to bring you, all of you, to own your Iniquity; that you may confess your Iniquity, and GOD may forgive the Iniquity of your Sin. My Place, and Duty, as a Minister, (tho' wholly unworthy of that Relation to GOD or you) binds me to cause Jerusalem to know her Abominations; and therefore I have descended to Particulars, that if it be the Will of GOD, I might shew to every Man the Plague of his own Heart.

The LORD knoweth, I take no Pleasure to rake in these Dunghills: I dread the ill Uses that the Sons of Belial may make of this Enterprize: I expect various Censures from them who should be otherwise minded; but my Record is on high, that the great Design of this Publication is, to reduce Professors to a more awful, humble, serious Repentance towards GOD, and singular Conversation before Men.

I have had no Quiet in my Conscience, 'till I entered upon this Labour. Though my bodily Distempers pleaded hard for my Silence; tho' I was told, the Prudent should hold their Peace in an evil Day; tho' I know it is an unthankful Office to admonish and reprove: Yet I have laid by all Impediments and Objections; and wish I had such Gifts, and such Affections, as might

THE PREFACE.

might render me some Way useful, to put you upon Self-Reflection, upon Self-Trial, in order to a full Repentance: I pray GOD, I may so far at last succeed, as to obstruct that cursed Exclaiming against the Sins of Governors, and other Parties, as at length to make you cry out, What have I done? Oh! how have I provoked GOD!

Having given you an Account of my Design, and the Reason of it, I shall only add,

1. That it may not be expected I should give you a full Catalogue of all your Sins, which are Provocations in the Eyes of the LORD this Day. Who can understand his Errors? Cleanse Thou me (and the Land) from all our secret, as well as known Faults.

2. GOD forbid I should be so censorious, as to judge all guilty of these Sins, in all the Particularities, or in all the Aggravations of them. Some are to be charged one Way, some another; but few can wash their Hands in Innocency, that they are no Ways Principals or Accessories.

3. Far be it from me to be partial in my Charge, to advance any Party of Men upon the Ruins of their Brethren.

4. I desire you would take this Catalogue into your Closets with you, and as you read, set a special Mark of Observation on those Sins, which

THE PREFACE.

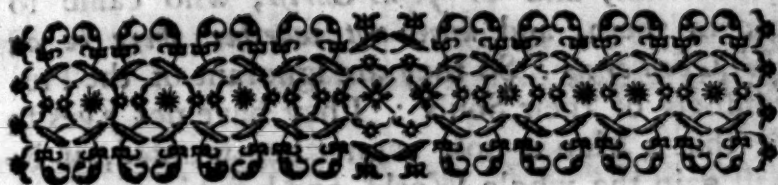
which are chiefly yours, in order to Repentance and Amendment, and then give the LORD no Rest, 'till He hath took his Pen, and dipped it in the Blood of his Son; and blotted them out of his Diary and Remembrance.

5. and lastly, Let me beseech the Reader, to be very importunate with the LORD, for an humble, tender Spirit; that Unbelief and Hardness of Heart, may not accompany him in the Perusal of the following Lines, and thereby both his, and my own Endeavours, become abortive.

6 JY 64



GOS



GOSPEL-GLASS:

SHewing THE
SINS OF PROFESSORS.



CHAP. I.

Their Regardlessness of SOULS.

I. *How Careless are we of our own Souls?*

(1. O how few believe they are Men, having Bodies that must die, but Souls that will never die? How few believe that their Bodies were given them to be serviceable to their Souls? Their Heads, their Hearts, their Eyes, their Ears, their Hands, their Feet, were all

all to attend upon their Souls, and to help them to Heaven : But this is not believed by many : As they are ignorant of the blessed *God*, who made them, and of *Jesus Christ*, who came to redeem them, and *know not whether there be an Holy Ghost or no* : So they are ignorant of the Preciousness of their Souls : They have not Eyes to see that a Man is not, cannot be, profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul. Alas ! many, who carry the Name of Christians, deserve not the Name of Men. When you begin to value your Souls, you begin to be Men. Oh that Men would value that, which once they shall, they must, value ! The damned Spirits know now the Worth of their Souls : How many will not ?

(2. *How few consider the Worth and Preciousness of their Souls?* When do such Thoughts as these, possess you ? ‘ Here in this earthly Tabernacle, dwells a Thing, that is Worth a World ; though here I crawl up and down, like a Worm of two or three Cubits long, and am in Danger to be thrown into an Hole every Day : yet I carry with me a Jewel, the Loss whereof the whole World cannot repair.’ How seldom do they consider sadly and seriously, what will become of their Souls, when their Excellency, *which is in them, shall go away*, as *Elihu* speaks ? Examine your Thoughts all the Day long, from Morning to Evening, and few are laid out for the Soul.

(3. *ARE not all the Thoughts and Cares laid out upon the Body*, though the Body be but Clay, and the Soul is a Spirit ; the Body must die, but the Soul shall never die ? How frequently do we think of our Bodies, what their Wants, Burthens, Necessities are ? But not so of our Souls. How much

a Call to Repentance.

11

much of every Day is spent in providing for thy Body, but how little for thy Soul? The Body should be but the Soul's Servant; yet Men feed the Slave, and starve the Child. The Body must be fed every Day, clad every Day, yea adorned every Day, and physick'd if distempered; but the Soul needs Food, Raiment, Physick, continually, yet lieth unregarded, is left miserable, naked, starved. A Servant hath two Talents to keep, the Child, and the Child's Cloaths: Will the Master thank the Servant, if he plead I have kept the Cloaths, but I have neglected the Life of the Child? Thy Body is but thy Soul's outward Garment. How often have your Ministers told you, that the Soul was better than the Body? and that your Souls needed daily Care more than your Bodies? And yet you look after the one, with the Neglect of the other. A Day is coming, when thou wilt wish thou hadst been bred in the Field among the Beasts, for that thou regardest thy Soul no more, than if thou hadst but the Life of a Beast: Thou wilt wish thou hadst been made a Toad, a Serpent, a Worm, a Dog, a Swine, for then thou shouldst not have suffered to Eternity, as now thou wilt, unless the Eyes of thy Understanding be opened to see, consider, and make Provision for thy precious, but perishing Soul. Thy Body is perishing every Day, and thy Soul is upon the Borders of Eternity: It must live for ever; and yet all thy Care is for the Body, which likely will not live Threescore Years and Ten; but the Soul is neglected, that must live threescore Millions of Years in Hell without Repentance, and then, when that Date is over, thou art as far from the End of thy Misery, as thou wast the first Day, thou wast thrown among the damned.

(4. How

(4. *How many will not speak with their Souls?* They are greater Strangers to them, than the *Louaners* are to their next Neighbours. Didst thou ever ask thy Soul such Questions? *‘O my Soul, how is it, how will it be, with thee! O my Soul, what will become of thee? What will become of thee in the next World?’*

(5. *At what cost were we any Time for our Souls?* The Physician is consulted with, if there be an Ach upon the Body; we will, with the Woman, part with all, beggar ourselves, to recover Health of Body. When did you know a Man starve himself, if he could have Bread and Water, whatever it cost? We will be at any Expence of Time, Labour, and Charges, to keep our Bodies from Starving; but how are the Ordinances of God, the Word and Sacraments (the spiritual Food of the Soul) neglected? The Flesh must be satisfied; as for the Soul, there is little Regard to its well Being. We cannot endure to see a Beast want Meat; but how easily do many digest the Want of that Milk, whereby they should be maintained and grow? God (saith one) *gives to these their Requests, he gives them Quails, but sends Leanness into their Souls.*

(6. *How fearless are many of spiritual Losses?* How common is it for People to draw back from the Service of Christ? what is the Matter? I shall lose my Estate, Liberty, pay such a Fine. They little consider what their Souls will lose, if they do not persevere. Tho’ you see not the Worth of your Souls; yet know, that they are the most considerable Jewels, you stand possessed of. All the World will not weigh with one Soul. Thy Money may ransom thy Body; nothing but Christ’s Blood thy Soul. Pause a while (Reader) and reflect

flæc on all thy sinful Neglects of thy immortal Soul, lest on thy Death bed thou shriek and cry, O my Soul, whither art thou going?

2. *How little are the Souls of others valued and cared for?* How many Masters are there, that care no more for their Servants Souls, than for the Dogs? Nay not so much? Perhaps some of you are careful that the Bodies of your Families be cloathed, be fed, but the Souls lie unprovided for.

1. *How do we justly censure them as worthy of capital Punishments; that murder the Bodies of Men; but not so others, who poison and destroy Thousands of Souls?*

How do you hate to have an Hand in murdering the Bodies of any, to lay Poison for the Destruction of any? and yet how commonly do Men lay the Poison of ill Counsel, and ill Example before others to cause them to fall into the Pit of Hell, and are not affected with this great Evil?

(2. *How troubled are we at any that kill Bodies, and that murder others; but not so at the Millions, that destroy their own and others Souls, that have an Hand in ruining, in damning themselves and others?*

(3. *If any neglect Means that might have continued the Life of their Husbands, Children, &c. how are they dejected? How do they wring their Hands, and beat their Breasts? Whereas, if by Carelessness, if by the Neglect of their Duties, if by evil Example, they have destroyed their Souls, they are not troubled about the Matter.*

4. *How meanly do you think of all that take Pains for their Souls? That wait at the Pool of Bethesda, that consult Ministers, and Books, and attend on the Ordinances for their Souls, whilst you account it your Wisdom to lay out the most, if not all, of your Time for your Bodies? Hast thou the Name of a Christian? I pray GOD to let one Word to sink into thine Heart; thou hast not Christ, thou hast not the Spirit of Christ in thee; he knows how to value Souls, and therefore shed Blood for them, and sends his Spirit in the Gospel to be importunate for their Salvation.*



*Their Want of saving Conviction and
Comunction.*

HOW many, like *Paul*, are *Alive without the Law*? How many, like *Sardis*, have a *Name to live, when they are dead*? How many are alive in their own Conceit, and perhaps in the Conceit of others, and yet are void of the true super-natural Life? How many are contented with their being baptized? They see no Need of *Christ*, they were born of Christian Parents, they are of the Stock of *Abraham*: *We have Abraham to our Father*. They do not consider how many baptized Persons are deadly Enemies to *Christ*, and to their Souls, and averse to the Ways of Holiness; they will not consider that Swearers, Drunkards and Adulterers have as good Claims to *Christ* and Heaven as these have. How many also please themselves with the Religion of Education? But, GOD hath not moulded their Hearts, though Parents have

have taught them some Principles of Religion, but they are Strangers to the wonderful Operations and Teachings of the Holy Ghost; they have not the *Unction from above* (they know not what it is) *that teacheth all Things*; and yet such as these are alive, *i. e.* merry, jocund, jovial, confident if any go to Heaven, they shall be of the Number. But to speak more particularly.

(FIRST, How many are there that were never convinced of original Sin, imputed, or imparted?

1. How few are convinced that *Adam* was a common Person, and that we sinned in his Loins; that if he had stood, we had stood; and that it is just with GOD, that he ship-wrecking himself, we should be counted Sinners in him? We did eat of the forbidden Fruit in *Adam*, we in *Adam* believed the Devil rather than GOD; we in *Adam* broke with GOD for Toys and Trifles; we were ungrateful, disobedient in him; we apostatized in him, and broke Covenant with GOD in him; hence by *one Man's Offence Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin*; for that (as *Levi* paid Tythes in *Abraham*, so (we became Rebels against the Majesty of Heaven in our first Parents: When did you shed a Tear for *Adam's* Sin, for your and his grand Provocation?

(2. How few see *Adam's* sinful Nature imparted to them? They see not their inward Parts are very Wickedness, nothing but Wickedness. Few see what a sad Apostasy from the Perfection of Man's Nature, Sin hath brought into the World; and how black an Image of Satan it hath drawn upon the Soul; they never saw what filthy, loathsome Things they are in the Eyes of GOD: They never saw their Noisomeness and Venom, the Garbage and Malignity of their Hearts. How

few see a general Defect of all Righteousness and Holiness, wherein at first they were created? How few are convinced of an Antipathy to all that is good? That they are Haters of God by Nature; that *they are dead in Trespasses and Sins* (a more dreadful Estate than if they were rotting in their Graves) that they have an Ocean of Corruption within them; that they have a worse Leprosy than that among the *Jews*, which got into the very Walls: Who almost think so sadly of themselves? They bless God their Hearts are good, though they be the worst of Men; they slight Ordinances, Closet-Duties, and Family-Worship; yet the Devil persuades them all is well; their Hearts are good; though the Heart of Man by Nature be like Hell itself, whose Fire of Lust is unquenchable; though it be like *Peter's* great Sheet, which he saw in the Vision, *full of all unclean Things*; tho' it be a Receptacle of all Impiety, yet how few turn their Eyes inward, to see their natural Deformities?

ALAS! All the Venom the Snake sends forth, is nothing to the Poison that lies in its Nature: And all those monstrous Impieties, which the Lives of Men are taunted with, are not to be compared with the Venom that lurks in the Heart of every Man by Nature. Men would not glory in their Blood and Descent, did they but believe how Sin descended: Men could not content themselves to walk heavily under some actual Misdemeanours, were they convinced of the Body of Sin within them; their greatest Sorrows would be for their sinful Propensities: Neither would you wonder at any Impieties and Enormities in the Earth, but would admire the Restraints of Heaven, that they are no greater. Alas! if the Reader were left to himself, he would presently lay

lay Hands on his nearest Relations, and on himself: Certainly, the Reason why we turn not Cannibals, why every Man is not a Sodomite, a Murderer, an Oppressor, is, because God hath a Rein on the Heart, and curbs it, for the Continuation of Mankind, that otherwise would soon be destroyed. The great Boundary of the Seas, and of the Ocean of Corruption, is the Sovereign above. But O! how do we commend Nature! Such a Man hath a good Nature; such a Man you may trust him, he will never commit such Abominations: You may as well believe a Toad will not poison, or the Sea will not overflow the Earth, if God leaves it to itself. But to descend to Particulars.

(1.) *How few see the Corruption of their Mind?* How few are convinced, that *the carnal Mind is Enmity against God, and is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be?* How are our Minds delighted with Toys, more than with the serious Mysteries of God? How few are sensible, that they are as foolish and mad as any Bedlams, in that they please themselves with that, which should be their greatest Burthen, namely Sin? They are worse than the Bee or Ant, for these prepare for a hard Winter, these provide for hereafter, whilst most People mind present Things, present Pleasure, present Profit. They busy themselves to know what is of no-Consequence, but are careless of momentous and eternal Matters. Few employ their Minds to know God, and how He is to be worshipped and pleased; but employ themselves in unprofitable Speculations, like Fools and Children, who prefer painted Glass before Jewels of Value? They more set by a little Mirth and Pleasure, than the Matters of their Salvation. How are our Minds enslaved to our Affections;

to the more brutish, and ignoble Parts of the Soul, and we love to have it so? Through this Corruption of our Minds how do we justify Sin, excuse it, and plead for it? Hence also, there are Swarms of idle, confused, impertinent, foolish, ridiculous Thoughts, that fill our Souls and Duties; seldom in the Day, Week or Year, any Conceptions of God, suitable to his Majesty and Holiness. How unstable are our Minds and Judgments, so that we are as Reeds shaken with every Wind; now for Duty, then soon wheel'd off again; now for repenting, then tired, and soon diverted? And if we know the Outside of Truths, yet how often is that a Bar to our closing with *Christ*, and walking in Him? And yet tho' these poor, blind, deluded *Bartimeus's* fill all our Ways, so that wherever we go, we meet with them; how seldom are any convinced of this, how seldom do any cry for Eye Salve, that they may see?

(2.) AND though not only the Mind, but the Conscience is defiled; though there be a Blindness upon it, whereby it misjudgeth, and calleth Darkness Light, and though it be senseless as a Stone, yet few believe this Corruption: Hence they take Sanctuary in their Consciences; their Conscience bears them Witness, though it be bribed and corrupted, and they have a good Conscience, though they know not what Conscience is.

(3.) How few are convinced of the Corruption of their Will? How do they wish that Drunkenness, Uncleaness, &c. were no Sins? How do they chuse to live a merry, rather than an holy Life; to be the Servants of the Devil, rather than of God, to commit Sin, and thereby hazard their Damnation, rather than through many Tribulations to enter into the Kingdom of God? And how gladly would

would most take up their Rest in somewhat below God, if they could but enjoy the World according to their Will?

(4.) *FEW are convinced of the Corruption of their Affections.* Though they hate what they should love, and love what they should hate; though they love Sin, which they should hate, and hate and slight God, whom they should love; though all be in Disorder, all be misplaced; though God be dethroned, and Sin, Satan, and the World be set up above all that is called good; yet few really believe that such a miserable Chaos is upon them.

(5.) *How few are sensible of the Corruption of their Memory?* Though they are especially charged to remember God, how to get Possession of Him; to remember Duty, how to practice it; and to remember Sin, how to shun it: Yet how soon do they forget such Truths, and lodge in their Memories Injuries, that they may avenge them; and Vanities, foolish Jest, unprofitable Toys and Tales, to please themselves therewith? You can remember how merry you were such a Time; but you soon forget a Sermon; if you remember any Thing of it, it is that, which either concerns others, or which yields you the least Advantages heavenward. We can remember the Fall of Peter much easier than the Repentance of Peter; David's Adultery, but not his Repentance.

SECONDLY, *How few have been convinced that Sin is the greatest Evil?* How few have seen it in its perfect Odiousness, as that which makes Men Devils? *How are most Strangers to its Pedegree, and consider not the Devil to be its Father?* We would be thought to have nothing to do with the Devil, nor that he hath any Thing to do with us; we can live

live in Sin, and yet defy the Devil and all his Works: We can make more moderate Constructions of our Sins, and call them Frailties; but *he that commits Sin is of the Devil*, i. e. the Devil's Drudge; Satan works in him and by him. O! with what Greediness is the Dung of Hell devoured and swallowed! *How few see Sin to be contrary to the Works of God?* God saith, I will have this done; I will not do it, saith Sin: I will have this suffered, saith God; I will not suffer it, saith Sin: Nay so great is the Contest betwixt Sin and God, that if it could it would unbe God. *How few take Notice of its Contrariety to the very Nature of God?* God is good, Sin is evil; God is pure, Sin is impure. *How few believe Sin to be universally evil*, that there is no Good in it? We cannot persuade Men, that there is Good in Poverty, Good in Reproaches and Persecutions unto Death; but easily are Men persuaded, there is some Good in Sin. *How few are convinced of the miserable Effects and Consequences of Sin?* The Wrath of God is not revealed against their Unrighteousness and Ungodliness, so as to make their Knees to tremble. The Hand-writing on the Wall is not observed. They are still alive. We cannot for our Hearts persuade Men to go up to Heaven, to see what Spoils it made there; could we herein prevail, then would they infer, that there is more Evil in the least Sin than there was Good in all the Angels in Heaven; for that one Sin conquered them, and spoiled them of all their Beauty, and made them, of glorious Creatures, to become such loathsome and hideous Spectacles: Neither can we prevail with any to take a Journey to Paradise, to see its Venom there; or to go to the Garden, or to Mount Calvary, to see what Work it did there; or to go to Hell Gate, to hear the doleful Shrieks and Cries which it hath caused there; though

GOD

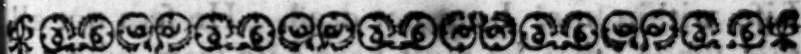
GOD hath said, GOD shall wound the Head of his Enemies, and the hairy Scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his Trespases; though there is no Peace, saith my GOD, to the Wicked; though Sin be the sole Object of GOD's Hatred; (for GOD loved the whole Creation, till its Beauty was blasted and stained by Sin) though Sin only separates between GOD and Souls, though it be the Founder of all Graves and of Tophet; though it fill the Conscience with Terrors, and Hell with Fire and Brimstone; yet few are afflicted with the Evils of it, but they drink in Iniquity as Water.

THIRDLY, *How few are sensible that they are cast by an holy and righteous Law, that they are condemn'd Creatures, that the Wrath of GOD abideth on them?* Few have seen the black Cloud full of Woes, full of Wrath, ready to empty itself upon their Souls: They take no Notice, that though the Sentence be not executed speedily; yet it is given forth; and there may be but a little Breath, and they are gone for ever. How many senseless Souls are there whose Consciences were never shaken, whose Spirits were never wounded, who never received the Spirit of Bondage to fear, who never knew what a fearful Expectation of Judgment meant, who go dancing to Hell? These are *rich, and full, and needing Nothing*, when GOD is about to spue them out of his Mouth. These are *wiser in their own Conceit, than seven Men that can render a Reason*. Though we endeavour with Scripture upon Scripture to convince them of their Sin and Danger, yet they are confident and easy. Never did they break one Night's Sleep upon the Consideration of their lost Condition by Nature; never did they loath their ordinary Food, or feel the Smart of broken Bones, as David did; never did they know what a wounded Spirit meant, what Anguish of Soul was:

was : never did they feel God's Wrath, or Sin, a Burthen insupportable ; they were never pricked at the Heart, so as to cry out, *What shall I do to be saved ?* Would you know the Reason of all this Security ? They are dead in Sins and Trespases. A dead Condition is an insensible Condition ; Death deprives of Sense as well as Life ; the Dead are not frightened with the Swords and Pistols at their Breasts ; the Dead fear not, though threatened with Fire and Brimstone ; the dead hear not, though God be upon Mount *Ebal* thundering Curses upon Curses ; the Dead see not, though Sin be so ugly a Monster, and Hell so frightful a Place ; the Dead smell not, though Sin stinks worse than rotten Sepulchres ; the Dead feel not, though that which is heavier than Mountains of Lead be lying on their Backs. Though there be so many Curses upon the Heads of all natural Persons, though there be an Entail of Wrath upon the Heads of the very Sins, they live in ; though their Sins are, or may be, circumstantiated to a greater Degree, than any of the Scripture-Offenders that we read of, as being committed under the open Sun of the Gospel ; though Heli be open to receive them every Moment, to entertain them with the Vengeance of a justly provoked God ; yet few fear, few work out their Salvation with weeping Eyes, and trembling Hearts ; they are still alive without the Law : I pity these secure Souls ; how short will they fall of their Hopes, and how far short of Heaven !

FOURTHLY, *How few are sensible, that all this while the Devil works in them, as in his Work-house ?* That he possesseth the Heart of every unregenerate Man ? *The strong Man keeps the House, and so all is quiet.* It was a sad Day when the Abomination of Desolation was seen standing in the holy Place ;

Place ; but what are abominable Men to abominable Devils ? They did but exercise their Cruelties on the Bodies of the *Jews* ; but how many Devils have their Walks in the Hearts of natural Men and Women ? If thou art in thy Blood, the Devil hath enter'd into thee, as sure as ever he enter'd into the Herd of Swine, and so hurried thee into base Lusts, as he carried them headlong into the Sea.



CHAP. III.

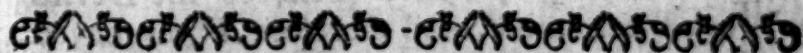
Their Want of Self-Despair.

IF Men are sensible of their Sin and Misery, yet *how many are going about to establish their own Righteousness ?* Though some are convinced of the Uglinefs of Sin, of the Misery by Sin ; yet they are not fully convinced, that the Covenant of Works requires perfect, personal, and constant, Obedience, that it admits not of Repentance, that it accepts not of the Will for the Deed : but *Curses every one that continueth not in all Things, which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* So that if there be a vain Thought, the Conditions of that Covenant are broken ; and nothing, save fearful Expectation, should seize on such a Soul. Few, I say, believe this ; but though they are bankrupt Children of *Adam*, yet they hope to set up again, and maintain themselves, without being beholden to any other, for the procuring of their Salvation ; hence they reform in many Things ; and now, *Soul take thine Ease, thou hast Goods laid*

*laid up for many Years, yea, for Eternity; thou art converted sure, and so think all the Neighbourhood; oh! what a Change is here! The Man was a Drunkard, not so now! An Adulterer or prophane; but now civilized, yea, a devout Man: And touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, blameless. Now he is alive indeed; his Conscience is pacified, which before troubled him; he can hear the Word gladly, he can pray with some Delight: When before all the Ordinances of God were tedious. Now he thinks, sure I have Life within me, I am not dead. He sees not all this while, that he must have Life from without, and Ability from without: He doth not yet say, *Mine Iniquities are gone over mine Head, as an heavy Burthen, they are too heavy for me. Mine Iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.* He doth not see that he is dead, *i. e.* damned, and insufficient to think any Thing as of Himself, but all his Sufficiency is of God. He thinks he is not utterly unable to make Amends for his Sins not quite dead. He sees not, that it is as easy to make new Worlds, as to put up one acceptable Prayer to God. He sees not, that he needs an Almighty Power to enable him to perform his Duties, and infinite Satisfaction to discharge him of his Debts. He is somewhat sensible of his Danger by Sin, but he eyes not him that is mighty to save. He looks for Help within, but not without. He sees no absolute Necessity of Christ all this while. He sees not, that there is no Salvation in any other, no other Name given among Men, whereby we must be saved. He hopes to go to Heaven through Doors of his own, the Door of Repentance, the Door of Reformation, the Door of good Works; hence he takes hold of the Mercy of God, and the Promises of Pardon.*

“ Thus have I done (saith he) and now my Case
 “ is

“ is good. O ! what a Change is here ? ” This is the Case of Multitudes, whom *Christ* will not save, for they are not lost, they think to save themselves from Wrath to come. They see not that there is a Satisfaction to be made which they cannot make ; wherefore their Hopes are from their Reformations, not from *Christ* ; their Peace is from their Performances, not from the Blood of Attonement : Whereas, if they saw the absolute Necessity of obtaining *Christ* and his Righteousness, they would be put off with nothing else. But O ! how hard do we find it, first to take off Men from their Sins, and then from Confidence in their Duties ? We tell Men, *Christ* will have no Sharer in the Glory of saving lost Man ; but People will at least have their Works and *Christ* to divide the Spoils. We advise Men to lay no Weight on their Duties, but to lean alone on *Christ*’s Merits ; but in vain. *Christ* saith, *If ye seek me, let these go their Way*, these Duties, as well as these Sins ; but the deaf Ear is turned, and we find it much easier to persuade Men, their Sins will damn them, than their Duties, whilst *Christ* is thereby neglected.



C H A P. IV.

Their Miscarriages about their Spiritual Troubles.

IF the Spirit of the LORD hath convinced Men of their Danger by their Sins, and their own Righteousness, so that they still see GOD angry with them, and their Souls remain under Trouble and

Disquiet; yet are they not guilty of some, if not all, of the following Miscarriages?

1. *How few are there that justify GOD: Few accept of the Punishment of their Iniquities; they do not clear GOD, as they should, from all Unrighteousness. Commonly proud Hearts swell and fume against these Methods of GOD. Though the Filthiness of their Hearts be laid open before them, yet they fall not down upon their Faces in the Acknowledgment of their Unworthiness of Mercy; few charge themselves, and acquit GOD. They cannot be brought to give GOD the Glory of his Righteousness, if He should condemn them to the Pit of Hell; they do not own the Desert of Damnation, and charge themselves with it, as their due Portion. Few say, I will bear the Indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against Him; or with Daniel, O LORD! Righteousness belongeth unto Thee; but unto us Confusion of Face. How seldom do you hear this Confession in their Mouths, "LORD, I am thy Creature, and Thou mayst do with thy Creature what pleaseth Thee; It pleased Thee to put thine Image on me, to create me upright; but I have sought out many Inventions, I have sold myself for nought, I have preferred the Devil's Work before thine, and therefore Thou mayest abhor me, and give me my Portion among the damned; and if I feel some Sparks of Hell-fire (in thy present Frowns) it is of thy rich Patience and Mercy, that they are but Sparks; if Thou cast me off for ever, it is but what I have deserved long ago; it is of the LORD's Mercy, that I was not hurled to Hell, because of my native Sinfulness; but woe is me, I have provoked the pure Eyes of thy glorious Majesty Days without Number. I have been a Rebel of a long standing against Thee, my Will hath been quarrelling*
" with

“ with thine these many Years, and therefore if I
 “ be sent to Hell, *Thou art* righteous and clear when
 “ *Thou judgest*. I can blame none save myself, if
 “ I perish everlastingly, though I have many Fears
 “ and Sorrows on me; yet blessed be God, they
 “ are not the Sorrows of Hell. Thanks be to the
 “ LORD, that I am not yet among the damned,
 roaring in the Pit. Few believe they deserve Dam-
 nation; hence Souls are murmuring at any Afflic-
 tion, at the Loss of an Husband, Child, Estate, as
 if God had dealt hardly with them.

2. How few Spiritual, when under Troubles, are
 willingly under them? They see not the Advantage
 of having their *Way hedged up with these Thorns*;
 they do not receive the Spirit of Bondage; they do
 not accept this Punishment; they take it not kind-
 ly at God's Hands. Their Troubles are involun-
 tary; they are held in the Chains against their Will.
 How many are afraid of Sorrow for Sin. Some think
 it will spoil good Faces, and their Beauty may be
 lost through their Troubles; others think it will
 bring them to Despair, and therefore farewell to
 such a Preacher; he is too terrible for their Souls.
 Hence Saul must have his *Harp* to divert him, the
 Cards must be taken up again, some merry Books,
 must be read, perhaps a Play may be seen, Com-
 pany must be called in, and all this, to divert the
 Soul from minding its Danger: Or some unskilful
 and unfaithful Emperick shall be sent for, to sow
Pillows under him, that he may sleep the quieter.
 How few are active in their Troubles? Retire,
 that they may search the Scriptures, and ransack
 their Hearts? How do some quarrel with their
 Ministers, and snarl at the Books, that give them
 Trouble of Spirit?

3. *How few mourn for Sin upon Spiritual Accounts?* That their GOD is dishonoured (their good and gracious GOD, who hath done so much for them,) doth not chiefly cut their Hearts; *Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this Evil in thy Sight;* but perhaps they are troubled for wronging themselves, endangering themselves. They cry as Dogs, when they have done a Fault, they fear the Whip, and so they howl.

4. *How many mourn for their Sins, yet live in the continued Practice of them?* Notwithstanding their Tears, yet their Hearts are in League with their Lusts: Few, whilst mourning for their Sins, are careful which Way GOD may have Satisfaction for the Injuries, that have been done unto Him: The Mourning of many lasts no longer than the Trouble of Conscience; as soon as the Guilt of Sin is removed, (as they hope) their Mourning ceaseth, though the Strength of Sin be as great as ever.

5. *AMONG the Multitudes professing Religion, how many seek for Grace, in order to their Comfort?* (Joy, Peace, Comfort, being their great End) *but how few seek for Comfort in order to Grace?*

6. *How few mourn for their slighting of Christ?* (It is more natural, and so more easy to mourn for Sins against the Law, than those against *Christ* and his Gospel;) Therefore if there be many Tears shed for Neglect of Prayer, for Theft, Perjury, &c. yet how few are found mourning for undervaluing and rejecting *Christ*? Whose Soul cries out, "O! how unkind have I been to *Christ*? O! that he should come out of his Father's Bosom for me, come under the Law, yea dye for me; and yet I should keep Him out of Doors; that the Son of GOD, that the Brightness of the Father's
" *Glory,*

“ Glory, and the exprefs Image of his Person, the
 “ Upholder of all Things by the Word of his Power,
 “ when He had by Himself purged our Sins, and sat
 “ down on the Right-hand of the Majesty on high,
 “ should stoop so low, as to stand at the Door, and
 “ knock, and yet that I should not let Him in;
 “ break Heart, break into small Dust, be trem-
 “ bling all over for thy Unkindnesses to so great,
 “ so rich, so good a Friend. O Wretch that I
 “ have been! I abhor myself in Dust before Thee.”
 I meet with few of these Mourners.



C H A P. V.

*Their Ignorance of Christ: Their serving
 their Turns of Christ: Their making base
 Capitulations with Christ.*

HOW many are ignorant of Christ, and of
 what Use He is to perishing Souls? They
 know no more the Gift of GOD, than the Samaritan
 Woman did; they know not what an excellent
 Gift Christ is, that He is the Fountain of living Wa-
 ter, and therefore ask nothing of Him. How few,
 know Christ to be their only Life? If you did be-
 lieve, that He that bath the Son, bath Life; and He,
 that bath not the Son of GOD, bath not Life: And
 that whoso findeth Me (Christ) findeth Life, and
 shall obtain Favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth
 against Me (Christ) wrongeth his own Soul; all they
 that hate Me (Christ) love Death: Upon such a
 Conviction, what would you not give for Life? *Esau*
 will part with his Birth-right, to preserve his
 Life. The Woman will part with all her Estate

to recover Health, and to secure herself from the Grave. Of all Blessings we value *Life* mostly, but few have such Esteem of *Christ*. Few can say, as *Paul*, *What Things were Gain to me, those I counted Loss for Christ; yea doubtless, and I count all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ. Jesus my LORD; for whom I have suffered the Loss of all Things, and do count them but Dung, that I may win Christ.* Or with *David*, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides Thee.* Few look on *Christ* as the Original of their Life, that they must live, move, and have their Being in *Christ*, and from *Christ* alone; that they are dead without Him; and hence their Desires are not after Him. If you knew, that you want *Christ* more than Bread and Water, then would you cry out, LORD, give me *Christ*, None but *Christ*, None but *Christ*, in Him is my Help, in Him is my Salvation. He is the Author of all our good Affections, and of all our gracious Abilities; but alas! blind Man sees him not in his Usefulness. Men must dye, and be damned, without *Christ*; but they know it not, they know no Good that *Christ* is, and no Good that *Christ* brings.

SECONDLY, *How many serve their Turns of Christ, close with Christ for their own Ends?* When Men have served their Turns, one of another, away they go; so these, Troubles they have, and Ease they would have; they have stayed off from *Christ* as long as they could; they have tryed worldly Comforts, they will not do; they have tryed Duties, they will give no Rest; and therefore, in the Terror of their Spirits, they must have *Christ*, so much of Him, as may give them Quiet and Rest. Men are weary of the Fetters, wherein they are held under the Law; they would fain be delivered.

delivered from *Satan* that torments them, and from the Sins that now stare them in the Face; they groan under the Weight of the Wrath of God, but not under the Body of Sin; *Satan*, as a Tormentor, is un-welcome, but as a Tempter, is still liked well enough, "O! I am afraid I shall go to Hell. O! if there be no other Way to escape but through *Christ*, O! then for *Christ*, then Sermons and Ministers are welcome, in Hopes of bringing in (not so much *Christ*, as) Peace and Comfort to the troubled Spirit." So that Men use *Christ* as sick Men take Meat, not for Love of it, or Liking to it (for their Stomachs rise against it) but for Fear of Death, which makes them force themselves to eat. Though many come to *Christ*, it is by Constraint, not willingly; not with Delight, not as an healthy Man comes to a full Table to feed with Pleasure. Many to avoid a greater Mischief, to avoid Damnation, to avoid eternal Torments, will to *Christ* in their sore Extremities; they will then make large Confessions, take up great Resolutions against their Sins, pray to God as they never prayed before; but upon Ease to the impostumed Matter, upon Recoveries out of their Troubles, they become, if not profane, yet worldly and negligent of *Christ*, his Person, his Laws, his Concernments.

I APPEAL to thy Conscience, whether *Christ* be valued, be look'd after, save in a Strait? When Trouble is upon thee, then this Physician is sent for; but when the Pang is over, the Physician's Company is too chargeable, is no Way desirable; the sooner he turns his Back, the better. Is it not so? If *Christ* in the Day as well as in the Night, lies chief between thy Breasts, thou hast cause to say, *Bless the LORD, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name.* But I fear *Christ* in

in the Time of *Contagion* shall go for something; but *Christ* in Days of Health and Ease shall be valued no more than a meer *Cipher*. It is one Thing to take *Christ*, to *pacify the Conscience* and another to take him to purify the Heart.

THIRDLY, *How many have base Captulations with Christ? Many come running to Christ and ask Him, (as the Man in the Gospel) Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal Life?* Christ tells him and them, *Go thy Way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven; and come, take up the Cross, and follow Me:* But as he, so they are discontented: And he was sad at that Saying, and went away grieved, for he had great Possessions. Undoubtedly many have some Glimpse of *Christ's* Glory, and run to *Christ*, whilst others deride Him; but they like not the Price that *Christ* sets; They would have *Christ* on their own Terms. *Christ's* Terms are to have the Heart; *My Son, give me thy Heart: Do not lend it only, but give, give it chearfully, give me it now: Give Me thy Heart, to be framed and fashioned by Me, to be stamped and sealed by Me; be no longer thine own, Give me thine Heart, do not keep it to thyself: Lay up and leave thine Heart in my Hand, for me to keep it for Thee*

BUT alas! how shamefully do we break with *Christ*? We are content to give *Christ* the Body, the outward Man, the Ear, the Tongue, the Head, but we reserve our Hearts for the Service of the World and of Sin: Or if we are persuaded to give the Heart; yet it is but a divided Heart, not the whole Heart: *Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thine Heart, saith Christ;* but Pride, Covetousness, or Voluptuousness have a Share. Few
see

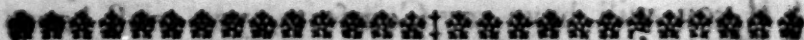
see themselves so miserable without *Christ*, as to come up to the Price; they will not treat with *Christ*, unless they may have the Pleasure of Sin; and may fulfill the Lusts of the Flesh; but if Conscience be disquieted, and troublesome, then they make new Offers; they will leave many Sins, they will except but one: If *one Sin* and *Christ* may share the Heart betwixt them, the Man is contented; but few are contented, that every *Knee should bow*, that every Sin be parted from. If the Conscience be not quiet upon this; then, as Mariners throw overboard their Goods, their Jewels, their Bales of Silk, in a Tempest, to ease the Vessel; which they wish for in a Calm, and labour to fetch up again: So many will part from all the Practice of Sin, throw all over-board, though much against their Wills, in hopes of riding out the Storm, and then wish for their Lusts again, yea, with the Dog, return unto the Vomit

AGAIN, many like somewhat of *Christ*, but not all of *Christ*; they like his Heaven, but not his Commandments; his Sacrifice, but not his Service. They would take of his Mercy, his Peace, but not his Grace, his Holiness. What saith *Christ*?
 “ If you will have my Comforts, you must have
 “ Me too; if my Pardons, my Person too; you
 “ must take Me as well as mine; you must
 “ have Me, as well as my Heaven. This makes
 “ many go away sorrowful.”

AGAIN, “ If you will have Me (saith *Christ*)
 “ you must be at some Cost, at some Pains and
 “ Trouble to enjoy me: Nothing of Me, or Mine
 “ is got without Difficulty and Industry; your cold
 “ Prayers will not suffice, your lazy Hearings are not
 “ enough; you must watch your Hearts all the
 “ Day long, you must make a Covenant with your Eyes
 “ and

“ *and keep your Lips, as a with Bridle.* Are ye
 “ content? Oh! no (saith the Slothfull) I would
 “ go to Heaven on a Feather-bed, I would be
 “ content to pray now and then, Morning and
 “ Evening, so I may be at my own Dispose all
 “ the following Hours.

“ *THREE Alls* I expect you part with (saith
 “ *Christ*). 1. *All your sinfull Lusts*, all the Ways
 “ of the old *Adam*. 2. *All your worldly Advan-*
 “ *tages.* By Faith Moses, when he was come to
 “ Years, refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh’s
 “ Daughter; choosing rather to suffer Affliction with
 “ the People of GOD, than to enjoy the Pleasures of
 “ Sin for a Season; If any Man come to Me, and
 “ hate not his Father and Mother, and Wife, and
 “ Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, yea and his
 “ own Life also, he cannot be my Disciple. He that
 “ hath all these must be ready to part with all.
 “ 3. *All Self*, Self-will, Self-righteousness, Self-suffi-
 “ ciency, Self-confidence, and Self-seekings. But
 “ Oh! how do many Pretenders to *Christ* hate
 “ these Proposals?”



C H A P. VI.

Their Delays to close with Christ.

HOW many delay in their coming to Christ
 And O! what Indignities are herein put
 upon Him? How long doth He stand at the Doors
 of Sinners, ere they let Him in. *My Head* (saith
Christ) *is filled with Dew*, and *my Locks with the*
 Drops

Drops of the Night. Though He limit Sinners to a Day, *To-day if you will hear his Voice.* Though our Life be even a Vapour that appeareth for a little Time, and then vanisheth away, ready every Moment to expire; though we must needs be damned, if we believe not in Him before we die; though now is the accepted Time; though the Spirit may never invite more: Though we are not sure of one Day of Grace more; yet how do many hazard their Eternity, rather than they will be yet beholding to *Christ* for Life and Salvation? Tho' they may have his Righteousness, his Redemption, his Spirit, his Image, his Heaven, his Glory, his Love, his Inheritance by coming to Him; yet what trifling Delays are Mens Hearts filled with? Though they are actually condemned by the Law for their capital Offences, for High-Treason against the Majesty of Heaven, and Pardons be offered freely by *Jesus Christ*, if they will but accept of Him and them; yet so is *Christ* fallen in the Account of them, who yet are called Christians, that they will hazard their Souls, rather than they will yet be so much beholden to *Christ*. This desperate Enmity against *Christ* and his Offers is the condemning Sin. *This is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darknes rather than Light.* All other Sins are nothing to this; what? When God hath limited thee to a Day, wilt thou, darest thou, carelessly mispend that one Day, when thou art not sure of another? How darest thou, having so many Ways transgressed against this God, having provoked him to Wrath by so frequent Breaches of his holy Law, to add to all these Iniquities thy trifling Delays of coming into *Christ*, that thou mayst be pardoned? How dost thou, when lying under the Wrath of a justly incensed God, send away *Christ*, as *Felix* did *Paul*, with *Go thy Way*
for

for this Time, when I have a convenient Season, I will call for thee: When, Wretch, is that convenient Season? Is it then, when thou hast served the Devil some Weeks, Months, or Years, longer? When thou hast spent all the Flower of thy Time and Strength in the Service of Hell? Must then *Christ* have the Dregs of thy Time? Must he have nothing but *Satan's* Leavings? Doubtless for these Delays is *Christ's* Wrath ready to be pour'd out upon this Nation to the uttermost. *The LORD JESUS shall be revealed from Heaven, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that obey not the Gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ.* By delaying to hearken to *Christ's* Calls and Invitations, thou tellest *Christ* to his Face that He is not altogether lovely, that He is not the fairest of ten Thousand, that there is somewhat in Sin's Service and the Devil's, that is more desirable than can be had in His. But GOD alone knows, how soon his Spirit shall cease striving with these poor Souls, and how long they shall be within a Capacity of obeying the heavenly Call. The *Jews* have a Rule, that if a Man vows any Service to GOD before he dies, he must do it presently, because he may die presently. Death and Hell are described coming on Horseback in full Speed: Ask thyself therefore *Jeremiah's* Question, *Can I out run these Horsemen?* However, through the wonderful Averseness there is in Mens Hearts from *Christ*, they stay and linger, like Lot in *Sodom*, that if GOD do not work a Miracle upon them, and for them, they will perish in the Flames. One hath a Wife, another a Yoke of Oxen, all of them some Business or other to detain them for the present from *Christ*. There are several Sorts of these delaying Professors.

1. SOME from their Love to their Lusts, and to the Sensualities, which they fear, when they are under Christ's Yoke, they shall be bereaved of, delay coming to Christ. Sin hath so rooted itself in their Hearts and Affections, that they are loth to take a final Farewell thereof, loth to mortify their earthly Members: Sin is so prevalent with them, that they had rather part from their Right-Eye, Hand, and Foot, than part from their Sins; hence they choke their Convictions; what they can, admit of any Pleasures and Diversions, to wear out the Impressions that are made in their Consciences, that they may still lodge Sin in their Bosoms, and not come to Christ; hence they labour to quench the Spirit of God, and will not use the Means, whereby they may be fully converted to Christ. They pretend they are desirous of Christ, only they doubt whether Christ is willing to receive them; but that which lieth at the Bottom is this, they are loth to leave their darling Lusts, and loth to pray and watch their Hearts, and to do what God requires and expects at their Hands, in order to Conversion. You may imagine God is highly provoked hereby; for God to send his Son unto you, the best Jewel that ever lay in his Bosom, and for you to neglect and undervalue Him, and prefer swinish Lusts before Him, it is a plain Argument, that you never saw Sin aright, and that you do not credit God in his Discoveries of the Glory of his Son. You do not believe you are so miserable without Christ, as indeed you are; you slight the greatest Gift, that ever God conferred upon the Children of Men; you make void the great Counsels of God, all the Thoughts of his Wisdom and Grace, in contriving such a Way by Jesus Christ, to save you from Wrath to come; you also frustrate the Expectations of God, for surely (saith God) they will reverence my Son; whereas

whereas, by your trifling Delays, you tell GOD and Men, that you believe not any Advantage you shall have by the Son of GOD ; you think it will be to your Loss, to receive in the LORD of Glory.

2. OTHERS, in Imitation of the old Adam, believe the Devil before GOD, credit his Suggestions, beyond all GOD's Discoveries. O! O! what a black-grain'd Sin is this? Saith the Devil, you have sinned against Light, and therefore *Christ* will not favour you. Saith GOD, *Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and his Thoughts, and I will abundantly pardon.* Saith the Devil, You have sinned more than others, you have provoked GOD exceedingly, and therefore never hope for saving Benefit by *Christ's* Death: Saith GOD, *Cease to do Evil, learn to do Well, come now, and let us reason together, though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow.* Saith the Devil, You have sinned not only against the Law, but against the Gospel, you have neglected *Christ*: Saith GOD, *Every Sin against the Son of Man shall be forgiven.* Saith Satan, You have no Right to *Christ*, it is in vain to come: Saith GOD, *Whosoever believeth shall not perish.* Saith Satan, GOD never intended you Good, you are a Vessel of Dishonour: Saith GOD, *As I live, I desire not the Death of a Sinner, but that he turn and live.* Now I pray consider, whether GOD takes it kindly at your Hands, that you should lay more Weight on the Father of Lies, than on the faithful GOD, who hath promised, and cannot lie; who must cease to be GOD in that very Moment, wherein He ceaseth to be true. You believe the Enemy more than the Friend: O! what a Provocation is this?

3. OTHERS,

3. OTHERS, through the Pride of their Hearts, will not come (as yet) unto Christ. They have no Mind to submit to the Righteousness of Faith. He is a proud Man who when condemned will not submit, will not stoop so low as to accept of a Pardon. I must indeed correct myself; Men are willing to be justified; but they would have their Duties to purchase the Favour of GOD; they scorn to be beholden to *Christ*. Thousands will die and be damned rather than they will have a Pardon upon the sole Account of *Christ's* Merits and Obedience. O the cursed Pride of the Heart! When will Men cease to be wiser than GOD? To limit GOD? When will Men be content with GOD's Method of saving them by the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant? How dare Men thus to prescribe to the infinitely wise GOD? Is it not enough for thee that thy Destruction is of thyself? But must thy Salvation be of thyself too? *Wilt be damned unless thou mayst be thine own Saviour?* GOD is willing. Art thou so proud, as that thou wilt not be beholden to GOD? Thou wilt deserve, or have nothing; and so scornest to submit to GOD's Methods for Salvation by *Christ* and his Righteousness alone.

4. OTHERS, thro' their Ignorance and Weakness stay off from Christ, in Hopes of working that, which cannot be wrought without Christ. Could they see all their Sins subdued, were their Hearts more prepared to lodge so great a Friend, they would then close with the Promises; whereas they should come to *Christ*, as soon as they apprehend they are poor, blind, and naked. But alas! a Sight of their Wants, is a Bar to their Coming. They would have the Fruit first, and then the Tree; have their Hearts purified, and then come to *Christ*. GOD comes, by his Spirit, to convince them of
D 2 their

their sinful Nature on Purpose, that seeing their Necessity of *Christ*, they might fly to Him, as their City of Refuge, and they are driven farther off by the Sight of their Sins and Unworthiness: Whereas they should come to *Christ*, as to a Magazine and Store-house, and wait on Him, in the Use of Means, for the broken Heart, the pure Heart, and all other spiritual Mercies, which their Souls are yet destitute of. *O faithless Generation, How long shall I be with you, How long shall I suffer you? Christ* is put to the utmost of his Patience, to bear with Unbelief.

5. OTHERS, through some Kind of seeming Modesty and Tenderness, delay coming to *Christ*. They are afraid of abusing the Holiness and Justice of God, if they should hope for any Privilege in the Blood of *Christ*, “*What Mercy for me? Me a*”
 “proud Wretch, an unclean Wretch, an Enemy to
 “*GOD*, a Slighter of his Spirit? I deserve no-
 “thing but Hell, what Heaven for me? I have
 “affronted the Majesty of the great God, and
 “what? This God bestow *Christ* on me! Who
 “can believe, that the just God, who turned the
 “glorious Angels to Hell for one Transgression,
 “will love me, who have committed more Sins in
 “Number, than the Hairs on my Head, than the
 “Sands on the Sea-shore? And what, Mercy for
 “me? Shall I have *Christ*? Will *Christ* accept
 “of me, who have wronged Him for so many Years
 “together?”

O! how long doth many an awaken'd Soul hang in Doubts and Fears, ere it will venture upon *Christ's* Graciousness alone; and then, when the Soul hath long stood out, the Fears increase. “I
 “have refused *Christ* so long; to all my former
 “Trans-

“ Transgressions I have added this, my putting off
 “ *Christ* and Salvation, when freely tendered, and
 “ therefore sure I may not now come.” And now
 if *Christ* offers them Mercy, still they are fearful;
 they cannot believe that *Christ* is serious and real.
 O! by these Jealousies of *Christ*, you provoke Him
 not a little. You are ready to say, This is too
 good news to be true: What is this, but to say The
 Gospel is false, it is no true and faithful Word; it
 is not to be received with all Acceptation, that *Jesus*
Christ came into the World to save the greatest of
 Sinners. This is the great Sin that made *Christ* weep.
 You seldom find *Christ* weeping over the Idolaters
 of the World; I find him not weeping over *Sodom*
 and *Gomorrab*, but if *Jerusalem* refuse *Christ*, this
 makes him weep indeed. *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, O*
if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy
Day, the Things that concern thy Peace! It troubles
Christ to see thee to go about to make God a Ly-
 ar, and to be denied thy Affections, for whose
 Sake he submitted to his Father's Frowns. O! this
 Sin of Unbelief hath great Unkindness in it, and
 therefore no Wonder if *Christ* upbraids for it. A
 Man is properly upbraided, when the Kindness
 that hath been done to him, is revealed to him, to-
 gether with his Ungratefulness. But what shall I
 say? So far are Souls from coming to *Christ*, that
 they do seldom heal this Sin, and seldom seek to
 God for Power against it; and though Men pretend
 they cannot come to *Christ*, yet the Truth is, they
 will not.



C H A P. VII.

Their taking Christ partially: Without conjugal Affections: And without considering the Cost they may be at.

IF at length Men are persuaded to come to *Christ*, yet they take him partially, both as King, Prophet, and Priest. As their King. They are contented he shall rule in many Things, but not in all. Some Part of *Christ's* Commandments they will submit to; they pick and choose: Here they will obey, in another Thing I pray have me excused: Few are brought to say, Any Thing LORD, I am called to thy Foot, (as the Man of the East was) ready to go after Thee to the Ends of the Earth. As their Prophet. Here they divide too; many Things they will learn of *Christ*, but they must partly lean to their own Understandings. They are also partial in their Close with *Christ* as their Priest. They hope to be saved partly by his Meditation, and partly by their own. As the Papists, so many Protestants are for a divided *Christ*; few are for exalting *Christ* alone, so as to renounce all other LORD's who have had Dominion over them, and to count all other Teachers besides *Christ* as vain, and weak. Few renounce all their own Righteousness, as Dung, to put the Crown on *Christ's* Head alone, to make *Christ* their alone Mediator, their alone Intercessor.

How

How many hope to be pardoned, partly by *Christ*, and partly by their new Obedience? They lay their Title to GOD, Heaven, and Glory partly on *Christ's* Merits, and partly on their own Deserts; few whose Hopes are founded on *Christ's* Satisfaction alone: Their Hopes of Acceptance with GOD are more from their Reformati^ons, than from *Christ's* entering within the Vail: If they have Peace of Conscience, they ascribe it to their Prayers, rather than to *Christ's* Intercession, and if they Pray in secret in their Closet, and in their Family too, when both before were neglected, they hope to pass by this Bridge to Heaven; but if it be too short, they will set *Christ* to patch up what is wanting, that they may land on the other Shore. *Christ* is still used only upon Necessity, and to make up the want of somewhat else; but very few dare rest on the Merits of *Christ* alone. To few is *Christ* made of GOD *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption*. But let me tell you, You must receive *Christ* entirely, all *Christ*, and all of *Christ*, or you are not Christians, though you have a Name to live. These are indispensable Terms on which *Christ* will insist, All or None; *Christ* as a Refiner, as well as a Saviour; *Christ* as a LORD, as well as a Sacrifice.

SIXTHLY, If men are persuaded in the Horrour of their Spirits to take *Christ* as Priest, Prophet and King, as a meer Shift, to escape their Troubles and Sorrows, yet their Hearts stand off from *Christ* as an Husband, they have not conjugal Affections to Him, their Hearts are not brought over to Him, they receive Him not into their Bosoms, into their choicest Affections. *Christ* is not the chief Corner-Stone; whereas to them that believe He is precious, exceeding precious, Few, like *Paul*, are determined

terminated to know nothing save *Christ*, and Him Crucified. One *Christ* was enough to take up *Paul's* Thoughts to Eternity; he did not care what he was ignorant of, so he knew *Christ*. Though he was brought up at *Gamaliel's* Feet, he laid down all his Knowledge at his Feet.

1. ARE your Hearts so drawn to *Christ*, as to count him the most necessary Good in all the World; and all other Things to be but Adjuncts, so that you are able to live without them, but not without *Christ*? Liberty is sweet to a Believer; but he can live in a Prison, yea and sing there, if *Christ* be within the Grate! Bread is sweet, but he can live in a Wilderness (a desolate howling Defart) and sing there too, as *Moses* did, if *Christ* be there, yea and prefer it before *Canaan*. A Wilderness with *Christ* is more precious than a *Canaan* without Him. If ye were true Believers, the World would not be accounted among the Necessaries. One Thing is necessary; One, not many. Other Things may a little refresh; but *Christ* is the Necessary.

2. Is He in a Sense the only Good to your Souls? Is nothing else good separated from *Christ*? Give a Believer what you will without *Christ*, it weighs nothing; he droops, as the Mary-gold, when the Sun withdraws. There is none good but *Christ*; Riches are miscall'd Goods: They are not good save as they relate to *Christ*, as they come from *Christ*, from that Bosom of Love, and as they advance *Christ*, and bring *Christ* and the Soul to nearer Communion. If the World in its Glory, and Fulness, hinder communion with *Christ*, by deadning, flattning and distracting the Heart, it becomes a Burthen: He is burthened with Friends, Relations, Enjoyments of all Sorts, that rob him of *Christ*, that eclipse the Face of the Sun of Righteousness,

ousness, through their unhappy Interposals. *What was Gain is counted Loss.* As he enjoyeth much or little of *Christ*, he laughs, or weeps, he riseth or falleth. In *Christ* are Riches, Honours and Friends; yea Prayers, Sermons, Sacraments, *The LORD is the Temple; He is all Things, and in all Things?* not only by *Way of Merit*, whatever they have, or expect, is on *Christ's* Account; not only by *Way of Conveyance*, through Him we have all Good communicated; not only by *Way of Causality*, as He worketh in all; but He is all virtually, He is instead of all Things to them, He makes up the Defect of all Things. If no Estate, no Friends, no Liberty, no Health, yet the Believer wanteth nothing. *As having nothing; and yet possessing all Things.* Thus the Woman told the Persecutor, when he threatned her, to deprive her of her Husband, *Christ is my Husband.* Look to your Affections, and then you will have cause to cry, *My Leanness; woe unto me, I am a dry Tree.*

SEVENTHLY, *How few Christians have, in closing with Christ, considered the Cost they may be at?* They were told of the *Cross*, but the *Cross* was at a great Distance, and Things, when remote, seem little. How many little study the Import of that Word *Cross*? What a shameful, painful, tedious Death it imports? Something of Trouble they would undergo for *Christ*, but really they never thought of dying for *Christ*, of spilling their Hearts Blood for *Christ*: So that they did not close with *Christ* understandingly; either they were ignorant of *Christ's* Person, or of the Consequents of closing with Him; that they should be hated of all men for *His* Name sake; that they must through much Tribulation enter into his Kingdom; that they shall be put out of the Synagogues, and that the Time cometh, that whosoever killeth them, will think he doth GOD Service.

Hence

Hence *when unexpectedly the Rain descends, the Floods come, and the Winds blow and beat upon their Houses,* (the stately spiritual Buildings, which they have been erecting) they not only totter, but fall; and great is their Fall. How many in such Times put away a good Conscience, and concerning Faith have made Ship-wreck? How many are Trees, whose Fruit withereth, without Fruit twice dead, plucked up by the Roots? They see not that the Riches of Christ will make them amends for all the Losses and Perils; they cannot ballance the Troubles of the Flesh with the Comforts of the Spirit; the present evil Things, with the future Inheritance in Heaven: These poor Souls (O that my Heart could bleed for them) were willing to come up to some of Christ's Terms, to lose a little, nay, to suffer many Things, but they cannot endure to lose Life. O my Soul! weep in secret for them, God will not abate a Point of what He requires, He expects that we take up the cross daily, that we hate Life itself, as well as whatsoever else is near and dear unto us. The Conditions are irreversibile, he will never stoop lower. This makes many a Man to go away sorrowful. I beseech thee, Reader, to go over with the Work of Conversion again, now the Cross is in Sight, now Tribulation ariseth: Now let him see, whether Christ is better than Name, Liberty, Friends, Relations, Lively-hood, and Life itself; and whether he can believe, that *he that will save his Life, shall lose it, and he that will lose his Life for Christ's Sake, shall find it, and that with Advantage.*



C H A P. VIII.

*Their shuffling together false Signs of
closing with Christ.*

HOW many shuffle together a Company of false Signs of closing with *Christ*? How do they count them true and infallible, which are not so; and so deceive themselves, as if they had *Christ*, and real Grace within them? Excuse me, if I bring in some of their Pleas, and answer them briefly.

1. *I see a Beauty in the Church and People of God. So did Balaam. How goodly are thy Tents, O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles, O Israel! As the Valleys are they spread forth, as Gardens by the River Sides, and as Cedar trees besides the Waters.*

2. *I have some Sights of another World, and I desire to spend an Eternity with the Saints. So had Balaam, and did not he desire so much? Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his.*

3. *WHEN I think of the Day of Judgment, I am affected with it, whereas before I was sottish and secure. So was Felix. As (Paul) reasoned of Righteousness, Temperance and Judgment to come, Felix trembled.*

4. *I am an Orthodox Protestant; so thou mayest be a Teacher too, thou mayst not only know God's*

GOD's Will, and approve the Things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law, but confident that thou thyself art a Guide of the Blind, a Light of them which are in Darkness, an Instructor of the Foolish, a Teacher of Babes, which hast the Form of Knowledge, and of the Truth in the Law; and yet fall short of Christ, and of Heaven.

5. I live inoffensively, none can lay any Thing to my Charge. But was not Paul, touching the Righteousness which is in the Law blameless? At the same Time he was persecuting the Church of GOD?

6. I have obeyed the Commandments of GOD for a long Time. So had the young Man in the Gospel; he said unto Christ, *All these Things I have kept from my Youth up?*

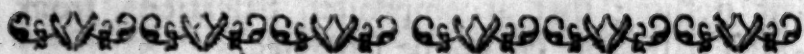
7. I have Joy in the Ordinances of GOD, the Word of the LORD is sweet and precious, I know the Time when it was not so. But did not Herod hear the Word of GOD gladly?

8. But I pray and pray oft, as well as hear, and therefore is it not well? It may be ill enough, if thou hast no better Evidence. *When you make many Prayers* (when you multiply Prayer, when you add Prayer to Prayer) yet *I will not hear.*

9. I consult Ministers for my Soul, and have high Attainments. But wherein dost thou go beyond those, of whom it is said, *They seek me daily, and delight to know my Ways; as a Nation that did Righteousness, and forsook not the Ordinance of their GOD; they ask of me the Ordinances of Justice; they take Delight in approaching to GOD?* If thou hast not better Things than these, thou hast not savingly

ingly closed with *Jesus Christ*; for as yet thou hast nothing that accompanieth Salvation; from which Salvation cannot be separated.

O! I cannot but pity these *Almost-Christians*. Almost Christians, and almost Saved. I may say they are not far from the Kingdom of God, and yet in a Sense they are farther than any others. Our great Difficulty is to undeceive these, I mean to take off these Fig-leaves with which they have covered themselves. It is hard work to persuade a proud Pharisee, that all his Righteousness will not steed him, that he must sling away all, that he must have something else to shew for Heaven and Glory. How have Men fled in our Faces, when we have told them, that yet they have nothing that is essential to a Christian, no more than a Picture hath of the Essence of a Man? You may imagine a Man, that hath bestown 20 or 30 Years in building, how loth is he to pull down all again: Though he fears the Foundation is but on the Sands; he will rather venture, than begin all anew: He is even ashamed to unravell all the Clue of his ungrounded Confidences. What begin upon a new Bottom? No, not he; and so *Christ* and he part. He takes his supposed Grace to be *Christ*, or at least, that there must be *Christ*, where such Changes are, and so cries out, *Soul take thine Ease, thou hast Goods laid up for many Years, yea for Eternity.*



C H A P. IX.

Their Ungodliness : Their Ignorance : Their Errors, &c.

HAVE not many who professed Religion been ungodly Men, *ἀσεβεις*, Men without Worship? If to deny or withhold any Part of that Honour, that is due to GOD, be Ungodliness; how much Ungodliness hath there been, and is there still among us? Which of us hath not been guilty of not giving GOD his Right or due Honour? Have not we suck'd in ungodly Principles? As that it is in vain to worship GOD, there is no Happiness (comparable to what the World doth afford) in Communion with GOD; this World must be look'd after, whatever becomes of Conscience. Have we not been guilty of ungodly Thoughts? Have not we thought, that GOD is not so harsh, but we may take Liberty in sinning; that He taketh no Notice of what we think, speak and do? Have not we spoken ungodly Words? Have not we uttered those hard Speeches which ungodly Sinners speak? Have not we spoken against GOD's Servants? Yea have we been afraid to speak against his Servant *Moses*? And have not many of our Deeds been ungodly? GOD hath always been sorely provoked by Ungodliness; *The Flood swept away the World of the Ungodly*; but yet we might have been ungodly under the Law, at a cheaper Rate, than under the Gospel; because the Gospel gives us more clear and certain Notions,
of

of GOD's Excellency and Glory, and lays more Obligations upon us to respect GOD, and therefore is called a *Doctrine according to Godliness*. *The Ungodly shall not stand in Judgment*, neither in the World to come, nor in this World. The Day of Judgment is appointed on Purpose to take Vengeance of ungodly Persons.

FIRST, *Have not some been, and still are, altogether ignorant of GOD? May it not be said to many of us; Yea worship yea know not what? Do not many Professors worship GOD upon no other Account, than the Romans did their Jupiter, or the Ephesians their Diana, viz. because He is the GOD of the Nation wherein they were born; because he was their Forefathers GOD? Have not we worshipped GOD by Tradition, more than out of Conviction of Judgment? Hath not our Worship been to the unknown GOD? GOD is truly, in a Scriptural Sense, unknown to all, that do not know Him experimentally and practically. Now, have we tasted and seen that the LORD is gracious? Have not we said, we knew GOD, and yet kept not his Commandments? He that saith so, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him: Hereby know we that we know Him, if we keep his Commandments. If we do not thus know GOD, we are none of his Children; He hath no Child so little, but he knoweth his Father: They shall all know Me, from the Least to the Greatest. Our being the People of GOD in Profession, will not secure us from Ruin. My People are destroyed for lack of Knowledge. The LORD Jesus will come in flaming Fire, to render Vengeance on us; for He will so deal with all that know not GOD.*

SECONDLY, *How erroneous have we been?* None can be such a Stranger to our *Israel*, as to be ignorant, that a Spirit of Delusion hath been let abroad, from *Dan* to *Beerseba*, so that the Pillars of Religion are shaken, the most concerning Truths questioned, if not exploded with Scorn. Have not some made God the Author of Sin? Have not some denied *Christ's* Deity? How many have denied the Trinity of Persons? How many, under Pretence that the Law of Works binds not, have abrogated all the Laws of *Christ*? How many have, under Pretence of advancing the Spirit's Testimony, cried down all Marks and Signs? How many have held, that the Doctrine of Repentance, Fasting, and Humiliation, are too legal for the Spirit of a Christian? How many have been altogether for Inspirations, and profess'd themselves above the Sphere of Ordinances? How many have accounted it their highest Perfection, to sin away all Tenderness of Conscience?

How many thousand Souls have perished by these Delusions? And what a dishonour hath come to the Christian Religion by reason thereof, I cannot express. "Certainly, (saith Bishop Hall) there is more deadly Mischief, and higher Offence to God in them, than in those practical Evils, which honest Hearts abhor: These, as they are immediate Fruit of our Spiritual Part, so they more immediately strike at the God of Spirits in his Truth and Holiness: And as Religion is the highest Concernment of the Soul, so the Depravation of Religion must needs be the most dangerous and damnable.

BUT alas! How little have we been affected with the Flood cast out of the Serpent's Mouth after
the

the Woman? Though the Trumpet hath sounded, *Woe, Woe, Woe, to the Inhabitants of the Earth,* because of Spiritual Plagues; we have been puffed up, and have not mourned. We have not considered this Judgment, as coming from the LORD, as a Token of his Wrath, *in giving up* so many of our Countrymen *to strong delusions, to believe a Lie.* We have shewed little Zeal for GOD's Glory, that hath been blemished by these detestable Things: Neither have we pitied the many that have followed these pernicious Ways. How little have we mourned for them, though the Apostle saith, *their Damnation slumbereth not?*

How few Means have we used for their Reducement? Hardly put up a Prayer for them? Not admonished them, but let them alone to perish in their Delusions? Not so much as requested an able Minister to have Recourse to these poor deluded Souls, in order to the turning them from the Idols of their own Brains?

How little have we endeavoured to strengthen ourselves, to prepare Antidotes against this Infection? We have not studied the Scriptures, that we might *warn the Unruly, and resist Gain-sayers, and be established in the present Truths;* but, though we have seen so many ship-wreck their Faith and Consciences, yet we have been high-minded and have not feared.

HAVE we not been guilty of not expressing our Dislike of the Ways of Hereticks as we should? We have not shunn'd them as we ought. To maintain a Party, to strengthen a Faction, how have we too much countenanced them? Their Fellowship hath not been enough avoid-

ed. How little have we regarded these Apostolical Injunctions? *Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them, which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. And if any Man obey not our Word, note that Man, and have no Company with him, that he may be ashamed.* We have shunn'd the House where one with the Plague-sore dwells; but we have not with-drawn from them that Cause to err from the Words of Knowledge.

WHAT shall I say? We have not so heartily and vigorously contended for the Faith, which was once, and but once, delivered to the Saints, as we ought. The LORD humble us for our Luke-warmness. Sure we have not been valiant for the Truth upon the Earth. I do not in all this go about to justify undue Rigours. God knows, we have been too severe against some Things of less Moment, we have had too much Zeal about Mint and Anise: We have been too imposing of what lies dark and obscure in the Book of GOD; and this while the Enemies Tares have been suffered to grow, and the Fundamentals of our Religion endangered. But that which hath been *England's Sin*, is too much permitting and countenancing damnable Doctrines. When GOD hath said, *Who is on My Side? Who?* We have hardly answered for ourselves. We have been doubtful in the Faith, not quite on, nor quite off, but staggering and tottering: Our Religion hath been rather Opinion, than Faith, so that we have stood looking on as Neuters, whilst Hereticks have made Merchandise of Souls with fained Words. The great Truths of GOD have lain loose upon our Hearts, they have not been fastened by the Master of the Assemblies, as Nails in a sure Place: And having little Experience

perience of what we profess to know, hence Luke-warmness followeth of Course.

O how by Reason of the great Defection amongst us, hath *the Way of Truth been evil spoken of?* The common Enemy fasteneth all upon Religion. They will not distinguish between Truth and Error: But if any that had been called a Christian fell into any damnable Errors or Practices, all Christians suffered thereby. And though some amongst us have by Confessions of Faith, and otherwise, borne Witness against Errors, yet doubtless our Consciences will tell us, that we have not by Fastings, Prayers, Studies, and all Endeavours, improved all our Time and Spirits for drying up the Flood of the Serpent, the Soul-destroying Flood, as we should; but if we have had any Spirit, we have let it forth upon them that have crossed us about little Points, rather than against them who have shaken the Foundations of our Religion.



CHAPTER. X.

Their Want of Love to GOD.

WANT of Love to GOD is another great Branch of Ungodliness abounding among the Professors of Religion. This is so great a Branch of Ungodliness, that *Christ* hath reduced all the Commandments of the first Table concerning the Worship of GOD to this, *Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, and all thy Might.* Indeed every one pretends to

to love GOD : I hardly ever met with a Person but said he loved GOD : But GOD may say truly, *How canst thou say, I love Thee, when thy Heart is not with Me?* GOD is used, and the World is enjoyed. If GOD comes empty handed, or with his Hands full of Trouble, farewell. They like GOD whilst they enjoy their Pleasures too, whilst they may not be infringed. Let but a few Things be considered, and we shall see how much Want there is of Love to GOD in *Christ*.

1. WHOM we love we are not ashamed of. The Mother's Love is such to her Child, and GOD's to us; *He is not ashamed to be called our GOD*. But do not we conceal our Title to GOD in some Companies? How do we throw off our Livery, and dare not to be known to have *walked with GOD*?

2. PARENTS are troubled when their Children are dishonoured, and so Children when their Fathers; but are our Souls vexed with the filthy Conversation of Sodomites? Where are the Rivers of Waters? Where is the *Horror because Men keep not GOD's Commandments*?

3. DID we love GOD, we should trust Him : We dare trust our very Lives in a Friend's Hands; but we dare not so trust GOD. What would a Man give that he had but his Life and Health in his own Disposal? When he is poor, he had rather it was in his own Hands to supply his Wants, than in GOD's; for he thinks it would go better with him. We trust GOD for little. We think ourselves quite undone, when we have nothing save a GOD and a Promise to trust to.

4. How

4. How little do we joy in the Presence of GOD and *Christ*, and grieve for their Absence? Is GOD all in the Want of all, and is GOD the All in the Enjoyment of all? Can we say, *shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us?* When we have no Fig-tree left, can we rejoice in the GOD of our Salvation? Can we say, *Take all Ziba, now that my LORD is come, now that the LORD stoops to dwell in Houses of Clay?* O Worldlings! take your Riches, and make the best of them, I envy you not, I have enough ^{CON} GOD? Do we so grieve for the Absence of GOD and *Christ*, that nothing but GOD and *Christ* can make amends? O that our Happiness, Life, Comforts, were folded up in GOD and *Christ*! Can we live no more without GOD and *Christ*, than a Beam without the Sun?

5. TRUE LOVERS are thoughtful to please the Beloved. Are we so to please GOD? A true Lover of GOD is always proving, *what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of GOD.* He is still searching that he may know more wherein he may please GOD, as willing always to be more useful for GOD: But how seldom do we ask our Hearts, what Way we may walk in all well pleasing?

6. TRUE LOVERS are open-handed, and bountiful to GOD; they bestow readily and freely any Thing they have on Him; they will part with their *Isaacs*, their dearest Things. Will we? When GOD calls for Limbs, can we say farewell to them? Are there not some Things so dear to us that we cannot spare them to *Christ*? Are we so taken with *Christ*, that our Hearts are disengaged from the Love of other Things? Is every Thing vile, but *Christ*? Is all you part from instantly supply'd in the Love and Smiles of *Christ*?

7. TRUE

7. TRUE Lovers are wont to praise each other : But how seldom do we set forth the Praises of *Christ* ? Love is full of Eloquence. *David* thought seven Times a Day too little ; and therefore he called all the Creatures of Heaven and Earth, Air and Sea, to praise GOD ; the Dragons in the Deep must not be silent. True Lovers praise GOD as much as they can, they exalt GOD to the utmost of their Power ; and then, from a Sense that GOD is above all their Praise, they would have every Thing that hath Breath to praise LORD.

8. DID you love GOD, you would love every Thing of GOD : Do you love his Justice, his Holiness ? True Love to *Christ* sticks not barely in the Person of *Christ*, but reacheth to all that have an Union with Him. Do we love *Christ* mystical, as well as personal ? Are we of Catholick Spirits ? The Apostle is peremptory, and brandeth them all as Liars, that pretend to love GOD and *Christ*, and do not love their Brethren.

9. TRUE Lovers of GOD thirst after nearer Communion with GOD. *My Soul followeth hard after Thee*. The Soul still encroacheth upon GOD. *Let me see thy Glory*, saith *Moses*, tho' he saw more than Mortals were (commonly) permitted to behold ; yet much would have more. *As the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks, so panteth my Soul after Thee*, O GOD : *My Soul thirsteth for GOD, for the living GOD*. When shall I come and appear before GOD ? A true Lover of GOD is under an holy Impatience 'till he ceaseth to see darkly in a Glass ; he would fain see with open Face. O ! (saith such a Soul) the Distance between *Christ* and me is too great : I cannot but groan earnestly, when I consider I am absent from the LORD, whilst

whilst present in the Body. LORD, I will die, that I may enjoy Thee ; I will not live, but I will die ; I desire to die, that I may see *Christ* ; and refuse to live, that I may live with *Christ*. The Contracts and Espousals content not the true Lover ; but he longs for the Marriage-Day. Here are Clouds that oft pass betwixt GOD and my Soul. O that I were above them ! Here, if I see and enjoy, the Fear of losing so sweet a Sight, abates the Comfort of Fruition ; but then welcome an eternal Day, that shall never have a Night.

10. IF you loved GOD, his Commandments would not be grievous to you. Love cannot be easily posed : Love hath a Kind of Almightyness in it, so that heavy Burdens are made light, and almost impossible Things become feasible. But of how many Things do we say, *What a Weariness is it ?* How are you haled by Conscience, and by the Terrors of the Law unto Duties ? How like Slaves chained to Gallies, you must work, though sore against your Will ? Did you love, you would count nothing tedious, save Dulness in his Service. Sin would only be the Weight. O the Burden of Formality, Pride and Anger ! But *his Yoke is easy, and his Burden light.*

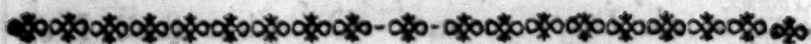
11. DID you love GOD, you would be jealous lest it should go ill with GOD's Affairs. The loving Mother trembleth lest the Child should suffer when she is from it. But alas ! how few are there *whose Hearts tremble because of the Ark ?* Do you really fear, lest Formality should eat out the Power of Godliness, lest your Trades should spoil your Communion with GOD ?

You

You may easily imagine, the Want of Love to GOD must needs be a great Provocation. What an Indignity is it to the Husband, that the Wife loves the Slave before him? The World should be your Slave, but it hath got the Heart, and *Christ*? must stand without Doors 'till his Locks are *unlocked*. O that GOD should stoop so low as to love you! This goodly Fabrick of Heaven and Earth had not been erected, but as a Stage whereon the LORD GOD Almighty would shew his Love to you. And did He not, in the Fulness of Time, purchase you by the Blood of his First-born, yea by his only begotten Son, and for this very End, that He might gain your Love, as well as reveal his own Love? Sure you should cast back GOD's Beams of Love upon Himself. This is all He expects, *My Son, give me thine Heart*: All the Command He lays upon you, is, in one Word, *To love Him*. GOD might have commanded our Children to be sacrificed, to pass thro' the Fire. O! what a Favour is it to love the LORD? That GOD will honour us so far as to suffer us to love Him? And yet we love any Thing, any sordid base Lust, rather than GOD. GOD would have us to love Him *with all the Heart, with all the Soul*. The LORD would not lose one Grain of our Love. O that we should deny Him that which He (with Reverence be it spoken and thought on) is so fond of! *And now Israel, what doth the LORD require of thee, but to love Him, and to serve the LORD thy GOD with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul?* GOD requires not the Cattle upon a thousand Hills, or Rivers of Oil; only, love Me, love Me heartily, constantly; and yet we deny Him this! I hate myself that I love the LORD so little, so seldom: It was He that made me, and not I myself: He hath wonderfully formed me,

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wonderfully preserved me, and *shewed many Wonders in the Deeps* to me. O! what shall I do to love the LORD? Let me love nothing if I love not Thee; nay, love nothing 'till I love Thee! O that you would grieve abundantly for Want of Love to GOD! You have passed as through the Red Sea, you have been as the flaming Bush. GOD hath looked after you, as if He minded none but you; you have been as the Signet on his Right Hand. And what, not love the LORD? Shame upon you, that you can dote upon the dark, filthy World, and neglect the LORD of Glory. All the Affections you have, GOD gave them, (when He gave thee a reasonable Soul) but for this End, that you should place them on Himself, and not on his Enemy. Is it not hard Measure that GOD should be denied Love, when He gave you Power to love? Believe it, whatever you do for the LORD, unless you love Him, it is not accepted. *Tho' you give your Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth you nothing.* Whatever a Man gives me, if his Heart be not in it, I slight it: GOD much more. The holy Apostle counts him worthy of a Curse, that loves not *Jesus Christ*. *If any Man love not the LORD JESUS, let him be Anathema Maranatha.* And is it not sad to be cursed to the Coming of *Christ*? He deserves it that loves not *Christ*; and he must and shall be forced to own the Righteousness of GOD in sentencing him to eternal Flames, who might have been secured against them, had he but loved *Christ* more than a base Dunghill Lust.



C H A P. XI.

Their evil Surmises of G O D.

EVIL Surmises of God is another Piece of Ungodliness, found too frequently among even such as have the Root of the Matter in them. I shall the rather insist on this Sin, because right Thoughts of God are the Fuel which maintains the Fire of Religion; without which it soon decayeth, and is extinguished.

1. Do not we miscall God's Tokens of Love? Hath not God sent thee many Tokens by his Spirit, to assure thee that He owns thee, and delights in thee, as his own? For thee to question thy Relation to Him upon every Turn, must needs be grievous to Him. How grievous then is it for thee to deny all his Tokens of Grace and Love to thy Soul, and to count them but Delusions, but the Works of the infernal Spirit, transforming himself into an Angel of Light? You that are Husbands, Wives, Parents, Children, cannot endure to have your Love and Fidelity suspected upon every base Suggestion and Whisper. Believe it, God takes Notice, and lays to Heart all your Jealousies of Him, all your base unworthy Censures of Him.

2. How ill are God's Providences resented? Altho' God hath told you there is a Beauty in their Contexture; that Things present and Things to come are yours; that all shall work together for Good;

Good; that your providential Enjoyments, that your Changes, as well as your Settlements, your Wants as well as your Abundance shall all be sanctified to you: Yet how few, with that blessed Man, *blesst the LORD, when taking away?* And with St. Paul, *rejoice, yea glory in Tribulations?* GOD assures you, that your Sickness, Reproaches, Wants, shall do you Good; yea Death shall do you Good, all shall be Good, or do you Good: All shall be Food, or Physick, *out of the Eater shall come forth Sweetness*; your very Thorns shall drop Honey, shall bear Grapes; yet notwithstanding what hard Thoughts have you of GOD under such Dispensations? Didst thou only accuse thyself, judge thyself, abhor thyself, it were well; but thou fallest upon GOD Himself, by questioning his Love from these Providences. Deny thyself what thou wilt, but beware of a Denial of GOD's Love, and of the Spirit of Grace that dwelleth in thee: O that all doubting Christians would consider this (too seldom suspected) Unkindness of theirs towards GOD! O! take up, and keep up better Thoughts of GOD, whatever his Carriage be towards you. *Though He slay you, yet trust in Him.* When will you be as David, who tho' beleaguered with Enemies, yet kept up good Thoughts of GOD, he doubted not of GOD's Favour and Protection. *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of People, that have set themselves against me round about. Tho' an Host should encamp against me, my Heart shall not fear, in this will I be confident.* In what? Why that *the LORD is my Light, and my Salvation, and the Strength of my Life.* GOD hath not spent all his Stores, He hath enough for me; *He will not suffer me to be tempted above what I am able to bear, but will with the Temptation make Way for my Escape.* Thou canst entertain good Thoughts of GOD in fair Weather, but let

them fall in a Storm. Whilst the Candle of the LORD shines on thy Tabernacle, whilst thou hast Dews on thy Heart, Melting and Enlargements in Ordinances; so long thou canst keep up good Thoughts of GOD and his Love; but let the Scene be altered, let the Sun wrap up itself in a Cloud and then not only *Grace within* is questioned, but the *Love of GOD without*. I am cast out from before thine Eyes, his Mercy is clean gone. But alas! how ignorant art thou of the Methods of GOD? Doth not He chasten every Son that He receiveth? Should not He have Liberty to use what Rod He pleaseth, whilst all are *for thy Profit, that thou mayst partake of his Holiness?*

3. How do some draw sad Conclusions from GOD's providential Dispensations concerning his Intentions for the future? When they lose dear Relations, an Husband, a Wife, a sweet Child snatched away, and perhaps by Inadvertency; then no sooner can we enter into the House of Mourning, but we hear Cries from you, This is GOD's Severity! Whereas you should entertain other Thoughts of GOD, viz. "That now He is removing the Idols of
 " Jealousy; now He is weaning your Hearts from
 " Creatures, that He may have all your Love; He
 " knew how much Spiritual Communion you have
 " lost by the Company of your Relations, and now
 " He Himself would have more of your Company;
 " He would have you to delight more in Himself;
 " He hath dried up the Stream (a weak unsatisfying
 " Stream) that you may drink and drink abundantly
 " of the Christal Waters, that drop from the blessed
 " Fountain immediately. Now GOD hath a blessed
 " Design of Grace, to prepare you for Glory;
 " He is making the Earth an howling Wilderness
 " that you may long for *Canaan*; He is leaving you
 " to naked Walls, that He Himself may fill them.
 " Few

“ Few put these Comments upon GOD’s Provi-
“ dences towards them; but commonly take all;
“ in the worst Sense.

ARE there not some that are apt to question the Love of GOD to them, from the blasphemous Thoughts and Injections that they are harrassed with? What, because Satan is your Adversary, must GOD therefore not be your Friend? Because Satan doth tempt you, will it therefore follow, that GOD doth not love you? Were we not wonderfully prone to evil Surmises of GOD, we should not make Satan’s Malice a Ground to doubt of the Love of GOD.

O how is Satan gratified hereby? He is the great Accuser, the great Tale-bearer, that separateth choice Friends: Believe it, the false Witness which he brings, is against Him, who hath given you wonderful Proofs of his Love towards you. It is the Enemy that vails and obscures the Work of the Spirit what he can. Hence you doubt of the Acceptance of your Persons and Duties; *There is a Cloud hangs over my Prayers, that they cannot pass up:* If I come to *Christ*, He will not look on such a Wretch as I am. Many such hard Thoughts of *Christ*, are suggested by Satan, and too soon entertained by us: *Whilst so, you can never thank GOD for any Mercy;* for you doubt whether it be a Mercy to you.

By giving Way to these Jealousies, you dam up the Springs of Praise, that should flow from your Lips Day and Night. Hereby you will also be hindered from waiting on the LORD, with that free and chearful Spirit as you ought. O that this cursed GOD-dishonouring Sin, were quite rooted out of the Hearts of Christians! Surely it is a Provocation to GOD, and *Let it be for a Lamentation.*



C H A P. XII.

Their Unthankfulness.

UNTHANKFULNESS is another Piece of Ungodliness that the Professors of Religion are very guilty of. Praise, or Thankfulness GOD expects as Acknowledgment, as high Rent, to be paid Him for all we hold of Him. But how hath this been denied? And thereby how justly have we forfeited all into the Hands of GOD? Though the paying of this Rent-penny be the only Heavenly Work that can be done on Earth; the only joyful Employment, that shall last to all Eternity? Yet how unthankful are the most of us? The very Heathens will rise up in Judgment against unthankful Christians; They had their Hymns to their Gods. *Plato*, when ready to die, gave GOD Thanks for three Things, *that he was made a Man, that he was born in Greece, and that he lived in the Time of Socrates.* How much more should our Lips shew forth the high Praises of GOD, who hath made us not only Men, but new Men? That we are born of GOD, adopted the Children of the most High, and regenerated by the Spirit? That we have breathed not in Greece, but in England? O the Riches of Free Grace! that our Mothers conceived with us in this Place of Light, and at such a Time when the Nation was most enriched with the Light of the Gospel? Why had not GOD brought thee out of the Womb when this Land was over-run with *Paganism*, with *Popery*? Why had not the LORD shut thee up with the rest of the World in
Dark-

Darkness, and in the shadow of Death? O that when the Gospel shines but upon a little Spot of Ground, which GOD hath inclosed for Himself, and stiles it his pleasant Place, his Garden, thou shouldst be the Man born there! That when the rest of the World is like the barren Mountains, that GOD should bring thee forth in the Place of his Tabernacle! And yet thou, ungrateful Wretch, wilt hardly confess, that *the Lines are fallen happily, and thou hast a goodly Heritage.*

How seldom is such Language as this heard from thee? "Blessed be the LORD that my Lot is *fallen in so fair a Ground*; blessed be GOD that *"I was born in England, and not in the Wastes of Arabia or America.* Thanks be to the LORD, *"that I have had more than the Light of the Sun, "Moon, and Stars to conduct me to Jesus.*

THAT so many Wells of Salvation have been "opened unto me, which have been shut unto "the most of the World," If *Plato* thanked GOD for living in the Days of *Socrates*, we may say that greater than *Socrates* have been among us. We have had those, *with whom we have taken sweet Counsel, with whom together we have gone to the House of GOD*, who have been burning, as well as shining Lights; many Examples of close-walking heavenly Christians have we enjoyed, such as have had the Wisdom from above, and more pure Learning, than ever *Socrates* or *Plato* could pretend to. The Society of how many heavenly serious, active, Christians have we been blest with, such as have been faithful Admonishers, such as would not *suffer Sin to rest upon us*, such as have daily told us here is the Way, walk herein? O the Helps we have had! But O the cursed Unthankfulness of our Hearts towards GOD; notwithstanding

withstanding his bestowing upon us so many Lights to guide us, so many Fires to warm us, and so much Salt to season us!

1. *INSTEAD of giving GOD the Glory of all, how have we sacrificed to our own Nets and to other Instruments?* We have praised ourselves, rather than GOD for what we have, We have not ascribed the Glory to GOD, but to Instruments; like unto that Cardinal, who writ down, what such a Lord did for him, and what such a Pope conferr'd on him; whereupon another inferr'd, *This man remembred his Friends, but forgot GOD, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands;* but GOD hath little or no Share in the Triumph.

2. *How sensible are we of our Wants and Straits?* But how unaffected with the Goodness of GOD towards us? *How full of Complaints are we,* but empty of Acknowledgments? Hath not the Want of some one Thing robb'd us of the Comfort of all our Enjoyments, and GOD of the Praises that was due to his Name? We have been (such is way-ward Nature) more troubled for the Want of some one Thing, than thankful for many Mercies. Like *Haman*, one *Mordecai* not bowing to our Desires, hath made us heavy and senseless under all our Honours, and GOD's Vouchsafement: Like *Ahab*, we have been more dejected for Want of *Naboth's Vineyard*, than we have blest'd GOD for a Kingdom.

3. *ARE not we ofner, longer and heartiest in the Petitionary Part of Prayer?* We are still craving the Supply of Wants; but too seldom blessing of GOD for what we are stored with: Our Petitions are long, but our Praises are short.

4. Do

4. Do not we set up our Rest in being glad of Mercies and Deliverances? Whereas it is one Thing to be glad of a Deliverance, but another Thing to be thankful for it. Then are they Glad: But that will not serve the Turn; it is a Return of an higher Nature, which GOD looks for: *O that Men would praise the LORD for His Goodness.*

5. HAVE not we neglected to make Catalogues of the mercies we have received, to help our Memories? This GOD hath ordained for a Law, and a Statute for Israel. What was this? That they should write it, what GOD had done for them, and so provide, that the Generations to come might know what GOD had done. But alas! how little Care have we, that *whatsoever* GOD does, may be for ever to his Glory? How unjust are we unto our Children, and the Generations to come, in depriving them of a faithful Record of GOD's Mercies to us, in which GOD speaks to them, as well as unto us? How injurious to them? By such a faithful Record, they might read the right Way, in sailing Heaven-ward; by our Falls, they might know where lie the Rocks and Quick-sands; and by our Deliverances, where Out-gates are to be found.

6. HAVE not we neglected to call on others to join with us in blessing GOD? When did we make a Collection of Praises from our Friends, that would gladly have been in the Choir? A thankful Heart is fill'd with enlarged Desires, that others, that all, would join in the Work of praising GOD. A gracious Heart doth not think it enough to praise GOD alone; though it would be praising GOD, were there none in Heaven or Earth to bear him Company.

BUT

BUT I shall speak more particularly, and instance in some of those choice personal Mercies, to wave national ones, for which the best of us are too unthankful.

How have we forgot the deep Pit, and miry Clay, out of which we were digg'd? Have we not been unmindful of the blessed Jubilee, when the Prisoners were let out of the Prison-house? Paul remembreth many Circumstances of his Conversion, the Place wherein, in a Journey nigh to Damascus; the Time when, about Noon; the Manner how, suddenly there did shine from Heaven a great Light round about me, and I fell to the Ground, and heard a Voice. He remembered also what he was before Conversion: I was a Persecutor, a Blasphemer, and injurious. But how have we forgotten, that the LORD, by his blessed Spirit, Translated us out of the Kingdom of Satan, into the Kingdom of his dear Son? It was He that made Jordan to give back, and delivered us from Egypt, and the Wilderness, that we might inherit the good Land.

How little do we bless God for Christ? Though He be the Stream that alone refresheth the City of God, yet how seldom is his Love, his Condescension for us, with his bleeding and dying for us, remembered by us, with hearty Thanksgivings?

How little do we bless God for the Covenant of Grace, the Bow in the Cloud, after a Deluge of Sin and Misery, the forfeited Lease of Eternity renewed, the Magna Charta of the City of God? And in particular, for the Promise of the Spirit, in all his Offices and Operations, for the Application of the purchased Possession?

How

How little do we remember to thank the LORD for outward Blessings? You began perhaps with a little, as *Jacob*, and now behold you have two Bands, a Troop of Children, Friends, and an Estate to maintain them. When others have had one Mess; you have had *Benjamin's* Portion, Riches and GOD too; Estate and *Christ* too; Peace, and the GOD of Peace too; the World, and a good Title to it: And yet do not you seldom cry out, *Bless the LORD, O my Soul! and let all that is within thee praise his Holy Name?* How seldom do you consider who hath maintained you all this while? Who hath delivered you, and pull'd you as Brands out of the Fire? You have had the Sentence of Death in yourselves; you have been, with *David* and *Paul*, in the Mouth of the Lion, and yet saved; near to perish by the Sword, Fever or other Dangers, and yet your Lives given you for a Prey: But how soon have you forgotten the Wonders shewn unto the Dead? O the many preventing Mercies that you have been made Partakers of! Hath not GOD secured you in many Travails? How many have died much younger than you, whilst the LORD lengthned out your Days in order to Repentance? How many have died in an Instant, and been snatch'd away, without any warning of Death's Approach; whilst you have had many an Harbinger, to give you to understand its Nearness to you? How many have been crush'd by Falls from Houses, or by other Accidents, hastened to their long Home; whilst GOD is long-suffering to you? How many have you seen led to shameful and violent Deaths; whilst you have been kept from such dismal Ends? And yet how seldom do you admire his Providence, and preventing loving Kindnesses? You have a Guard of Angels to attend you Day and Night,

Night, to secure you from Danger; but *how little do you bless the LORD, for the Heavenly Host?* And yet, if you do thank GOD for some outward Mercies, perhaps for Ease from the Stone, Gout, Cholick; if you thank not GOD more for Deliverance from Hell, from the Guilt and Power of Sin, than for outward Blessings, you discredit GOD, and his choicest Mercies, by under rating Spirituals to Temporals.

WE should have blessed GOD, for his Rod, as well as his Staff, for both are Mercies; but *how unthankful are we even for Sufferings for Righteousness Sake?* In every Thing give Thanks; as you should not be Partial in your Obedience, so neither in your Thanksgiving. How little have we imitated the antient Christians, whose Mouths were always full of *Thanks be unto GOD?* When they heard of Persecution or Protection, Crosses or Comforts, still cried out, *GOD be thanked.* How unlike are we to Mr. Bradford? "If (said he) the Queen will release me, I will thank her; If she will keep me in Prison, I will thank her; If she will burn me, I will thank her." Thou shouldst say from thy Heart, "Though sick, though scorned, though threatened, though *all the Day long counted as a Sheep to the Slaughter;* yet blessed be GOD that I *am counted worthy to suffer for his Name:* "Blessed be GOD, that He counts me a Son, "and chasteneth me for my Profit, that I may be "Partaker of his Holiness: Blessed be GOD, "that I am chastened, that I may not be con- "demned." But we have been too backward to glorify GOD in Zion, much more in the Fires. The Apostle Peter would not have any Man suffering as a Christian, to be ashamed; but to glorify GOD on this Behalf, and to rejoice in as much

much as he is *Partaker of Christ's Sufferings*. But GOD knows how far from Praises we have been, when the Storms have been high, and threatned our Tabernacles.

How hath GOD charged us to remember *Mercy*, and to praise Him for it? Ye that fear the LORD, praise Him: Praise Him, O ye Servants of the LORD! Praise thy GOD, O Zion! Praise Him for his mighty Acts: Praise Him according to his excellent Greatness. Doth not the Innumera- bleness of GOD's Demands of Praise and Thank- giving, aggravate our Neglect of this Duty? What Provision hath Christ made against this Sin? Hath not He appointed the *Sacrament of his Sup- per*, on Purpose to Remember Him, and his sav- ing Benefits? Do this in Remembrance of Me. But have not many been so unthankful, that they have neglected this great Ordinance, which was appointed to strengthen their Remembrance of past Mercies? I wonder not, that many complain of their Decays of Love to GOD, whilst they forget his Wonders of Grace and Love to their Souls. Did we oftner recount the Mercies of GOD, they would work Endear- ments betwixt GOD and our Souls: Did we con- sider, what a Wonder it is, that GOD should draw us out of Nothing; that He, who stoops to behold the Things of Heaven, should put his Finger to our Workmanship; that He should curiously work us, as Needle-work, in the dark Vaults of Nature; and that when we were ful- ler of Sin, than the Toad of Poison, yet He should feed, and cloath us: The Fire of Love to GOD would burn within our Breasts. How is GOD provoked by this Sin; GOD took it ill of the *Israelites*, that they remembred not his Hand; nor the Day in which He delivered them: How

much more do we grieve the LORD, who remember not the Goodness of the LORD in Canaan, yea in Zion? Our Saviour was grieved, that his Disciples remembered not *the five Loaves*, and *the seven Loaves*, and *how many Baskets they took up*: Innumerable greater Favours hath God shewed to us, and yet we forget them. How have we forgot the God that bridled Nature's proud Waves, and said, *Hitherto shall you go, and no farther?* When we were ripe for Judgment, then Mercy stepped in, and yet how slow to give Thanks? Hardly one of ten blessed God for cleansing Mercy, as they ought. *Were there not ten cleansed, but were are the nine?* This makes me fear People have not had a deep Sense of the Stains of Nature, for that their Saviour is no more thanked. Was it not God that brought you to such a Parish, to such a Minister, and to such a Text? And did not He, by his Almighty Power, enable thee to believe and apply? Was it not He, that broke thine Heart, when as hard as the nether Mill-stone? And what, forget the Wonders of the LORD in the Deep? This vexeth the LORD to the Heart. Did not He cause the Walls of *Jericho* to fall, *as by the Voice of Rams-horns*, by weak inconsiderable Means? Did He not alienate thine Heart from those Idols, that were dearer to thee than thine Eyes? Did not He present the Face of *Christ*, as lovely to thy Soul, who before was despised and rejected? And hath not *Christ* fed thee with fresh Supplies of free Grace, that have *watered thy Soul every Moment*? How many Doubts hath *Christ* answered; how many Scruples hath He, by his Holy Spirit, satisfied thee in? And yet, O wretched Heart! how unthankful hast thou been? *Thou hast forgot all his Benefits.* How just is it with God

to plague us; for this our Unkindness? Wonder not, that the Showers are with-held, that the LORD causeth the Sun to set on the Prophets at Noon-day, that the Manna falls not before your Doors. You have not taken Care for the Fragments, that nothing be lost. GOD's Mercies have been lost upon you. Our Waters were become Wine, our Gleanings were better than the World's Vintage: GOD dealt with us as Sons. But now, if He draws in his Hand. and make his Garden as a desolate Wilderness for this Sin, who can say unto GOD, *What dost thou?* Must not all of us put our Mouths in the Dust? Did not we sit under our own Vines? Had we not our solemn Assemblies? Did not we go in Troops to the House of the LORD? Did not Fear come? And had not the Churches Rest? Did we fear the Shaking of the Spear? Might we not have been as holy as we pleased? Had not we as much Liberty as we desired? But O then, how unthankful were we? How troubled were we, that every Mordecai did not bow; that every one would not be of our Mind? GOD knows what a Controversy there is with the Land, for the Unthankfulness of them that dwell therein.



C H A P XIII.

Their neglect of Prayer especially of secret Prayer.

NEGLECT of Prayer is another Part of Ungodliness, to common even among the Professors of Religion. Request and Thanksgiving are (saith one) like the double Motion of the Lungs, by which they suck in, and breathe out the Air again. In the Petitionary Part of Prayer, we desire either the bestowing of some good Thing, or the preventing or removing of some Evil: And in the Gratulatory Part of Prayer, we return the Praise, of what we received from God, to God. Though the Thanksgiving Part of Prayer be most, yet the Petitionary Part of Prayer is too much neglected. It is Ungodliness to go about any Business, or Journey, to fix our Abode, to use any Creature, Food or Physick, without asking God's Leave and Blessing in Prayer. Yea, it is a Branch of Atheism; this Irreligion is laid at the Door of Atheism by the Psalmist. Is it not a just Cause of Lamentation, that so many should be guilty of such Ungodliness

ARE there not many, that never Prayed in all their Lives? Thou hast not called upon Me, O Jacob. Do not many clearly evidence, that they are Prayerless Souls, by their Disobedience to the Preceptive, their Impatience under the Providential Will of God? She obeyed not the Voice;

she

she received not Correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near unto GOD. By their entring into so many Temptations? Watch and Pray, lest you enter into Temptation. By their being deceived, and labouring to deceive others in the Things of GOD? The Pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD.

DOTH not this Sin speak high Contempt of GOD? That GOD is not entertained, so much as in Thought? Yea, Doth not it speak the Heart's Denial of GOD? What saith the Psalmist? The Fool hath said in his Heart, there is no GOD; he calleth not upon GOD. To live without Prayer, is to be dead while alive; for it is to live without GOD. The Families that know not GOD, and call not on his Name, are the same. What? Will ye not do so much as pray unto GOD? What can you do less for GOD, than by this Homage, to own Him for your Maker? Or less for your own Souls, than to beg their Lives of Him, whose Hand of Justice is lift up against them? Their Souls, and theirs only, shall live that seek the LORD. No Malefactors die more unlamented, than those, that when cast, will not beg for their Lives.

How many also are there, that have cast off Prayer? How many have restrained Prayer? When they have thought they have prayed themselves out of Affliction, they had no more to say to GOD, till under Affliction again: and when they have for some Time prayed for Deliverence to no Purpose. This evil is of the LORD, why should I wait any longer? This is worse, than not to pray at all. Not to pray at all, notes only the Neglect of duty; but to cast off Prayer, a Distaste of Duty. But I shall be more particular.

THOUGH Prayer be the only Key, to unlock the Store-houses and Treasuries of all Blessings; yet how little hath this Key been used? I shall wave publick and private, and only instance in secret Prayer, and that both sudden, and composed, and solemn. *How few have made Conscience of Ejaculatory Prayer?* How seldom have we darted up our Souls to Heaven? As when we are hearing LORD, *set home this Word upon my Heart:* When in Prayer our Hearts are melting, LORD, *suffer not my heart any more to be hardened from thy Fear:* When we are about our worldly Employments, LORD, *keep my Heart with thyself.* Are not some of us wholly unacquainted with this kind of Praying? *Not such a Dart (saith one) to be found in all their Quiver.* They know not how, in the midst of their worldly Business, and Company, yea in the midst of their solemn religious Duties, in Hearing, Reading, Confering, Praying, to send their Thoughts to give God a visit, though a short one, in a Desire or two; to speak at least one or two Heart-words unto Him. Have not most contented themselves with their solemn Visits of God, and between their solemn Duties scarce ever conversed with God? What Account shall we be able to give of our Thoughts (the first-born of our Souls) from Morning to Evening? Is not this the highest Improvement of them, to send them in Embassies unto Heaven, and by them to converse with God? Do not the best of us find Strangeness apt to grow between God and our Souls, between our set Duties? And may we not impute that Strangeness to our Omission of these more transient and occasional Talkings with God? How many precious Things, in Christian Conference, in Sermons, in our solemn joynt Prayers, are lost, for Want of present Lifting up our Hearts to God, for his Presence therein, and Bles-

Blessing thereupon? How many blessed Motions of the Holy Spirit, suggested to us in our particular Callings, are quenched, for Want of these Sallies of our Souls to Heaven, for more Grace, that these Sparks may be kept alive, yea blown into a Flame? Neglect of this Kind of Prayer is no small provocation; it grieves God: There is much Unkindness in it, that God should be so gracious, as to let his Door stand wide open at all Times, and that he should assure us of Welcome, when ever we come; and yet that we should not step in so much as with a Desire, Hour after Hour; though we may thus visit Him, and not neglect any Business we have in Hand, or be uncivil to any Company.

How few have made Conscience of Closet-Prayer? Tho' Christ takes it for granted, that his Disciples will thus pray, and hath annexed a sweet Promise to the due Performance of this Duty. When thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, will reward thee openly: Retire thyself, get thee a Place, set thyself a Time, wherein thou mayest make it thy Buifness to pray to God. Yet how is this Duty wholly omitted by some, and too seldom performed by others? *Satan* prevails with some to put off this Duty from Time to Time, by telling them, either that they will but play the Hypocrites therein; or that the Time is not convenient, by reason either of some bodily, or of some spiritual Distempers; or that this and the other worldly Business must of Necessity be dispatch'd at such a Time. O how little do such Love the LORD, that are afraid to talk too often in secret with Him? But alas! how many omit Closet-Prayer altogether? Some content

tent themselves with praying with others, either in the Church, or in the Family: How can such look upon themselves as Christians whatever Profession they make? What? a Christian and yet never desire any Privacy between GOD and thy Soul? A Christian, and yet find no Errand to invite thee to speak with GOD alone? Sure thou rather seekest to approve thyself to Men, than to GOD. The true Lover delights to visit his Friend, when he may find him alone; like that good Man, who, when the set Time for his Closet-Prayer was come, would break from any Company he was in, with this Speech, *I have a Friend that stays for me, Farewell.* Others put off this Duty, by pretending they pray always; every Hour they are darting up Ejaculations to Heaven. As the Pretence of every Day-Sabbath comes just to no Sabbath; so the continual Praying of some comes to no Praying at all

EJACULATORY Prayer should not hinder, but rather fit for, solemn set Praying. Fire must be kept upon the Altar continually, but that must not hinder the Morning and Evening Sacrifice. True Christians cannot be satisfied with a Bit and away, but they must have their set Meals. Others look at Closet Prayer to be but a Free-will Offering (as they term it) which they may offer, if they will, but will not own it a Duty: Surely such are little sensible of their Heart-plagues, or else they would alone *make Prayer and Supplications.* In all my Observation, the Ruins of Christians, have begun in their Closet Neglects, either by omitting the Duty totally, or by careless, formal, customary Management of it. “ The truth is (saith a late Writer) this is the first Step towards Apostacy: “ Back-sliders grow first out of Acquaintance “ with GOD in secret, then Delight in this “ Duty

"Duty declineth by little and little, then are they
"less frequent in their Visits, upon which follow-
"eth a Casting off the Duty; and yet they may
"appear great Zealots in publick Ordinances; but
"if they recover not what they have lost in their
"secret Trade, they will ere long break here
"also.

AN hundred Things may keep thee, and hold thee
to publick Duties. But herein is the Tryal of thy
Uprightness, what thou dost in secret for GOD,
and with Him: When the Masters part (the two
great ones, GOD and World) then is the Trial of
of thee, whose Servant thou art; but Oh! when
the Master is alone, then He is most neglected.

WHEN alone thou art fittest for this Duty of
Calling upon GOD; then thou hast a Discharge
from the Cumbers of the Earth: An Heathen (*Scipio*)
will tell thee; "*I have never better Company, than*
"*when I have no Company; for then can I freely en-*
"*ertain my own Thoughts, and converse with all the*
"*Learned that have been in former Ages.*" But thou
art called to greater Honour, to improve thy Soli-
tude, to converse with GOD; when alone to have
thy Father with thee.

YEA, GOD communicates most of his Affec-
tions, to his People, when they are in secret: when
David was in the Night-Watches, then his Soul was
filled with Marrow and Fatness: Not that he want-
ed GOD's Presence in the Day; for seven times a
Day he praised GOD. But this Day-sacrifice yield-
ed him not that Sweetness, tasted in the Night,
when he was sequestred from all Company and
Business.

How

How few have observed the fittest Time for secret Prayer? GOD would have us, in this Sense, watch unto Prayer: GOD would have us early to tell the World whose Servants we are, and that we dare not undertake any Business, without first engaging GOD with us: that we dare not enter on *Satan's* Territories, without *Christ*, our great Champion with us: This Post should be sent to Heaven in the beginning of the Day; for no sooner in the Morning, do we begin to live, and stir, but we need fresh Succours from Heaven.

A TRUE Christian counts that the sweetest Air, which is the Fruit of Prayer; and all Things relish well with him, that run through this golden Channel; therefore he is up early in his Closet, that he may receive all, this Way, from the LORD's Bounty, and Faithfulness: Therefore no sooner doth he open his Eyes, but he opens his Heart to GOD; and before he Dresses, he must to Heaven in secret Ejaculations, at least, before he goes to his Closet, to pour out his Soul more plentifully before GOD: He expecteth no good Day, unless it be begun with a good Duty; and therefore saith, *My Voice shalt Thou hear in the Morning; in the Morning will I direct my Prayer unto thee: David prevented the Dawning of the Morning;* nay he prevented GOD; i. e. his Providences and Favours which he expected; he loved to have them in the Channel of Prayer.

BUT alas! how do we shuffle with GOD, by deferring? And hereby many Mischiefs attend.

THE World, that Pest of Souls, is admitted, before we have got our Antidote against the Infection of it: Hence Deadness of Heart ensues, Multitudes of worldly Distractions; so that after
a Time

a Time the Soul hath no Mind at all to speak with God; but tho' it must to the Closet, yet there is it filled with wandering, discontented and worldly Thoughts; so that the Time which should be spent in Communion with God, is taken up in driving these Fowls from the Sacrifice.

BESIDES, GOD is an holy GOD, and jealous for his Name, and He esteemeth it a Reflection on Him, to be so neglected, that He must be served last of all, and therefore with-holds his Influences from the Soul; and then no Wonder if thou be soon overcome with a World of impertinent Thought. By Neglect of early going into your Closets, you honour the World too much, as if it were more worthy of your Time and Strength than the LORD is: Whereas you should profess, that all your Hours are GOD's, and therefore you dare not but *honour Him with the first Fruits of all your Increase*; you will thereby sanctify all the Harvest, all the Vintage, by presenting GOD with the green Ears.

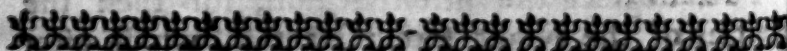
You neglect the fittest Season, for then the Mercies of the Night smell sweetest, which after a while, like Flowers, will lose their Scent with us: Whilst the Iron is hot, it is our Business to strike; his Mercies are renewed every Morning, so should our Praises.

By entring on Business without calling on GOD, you declare you need not the LORD's Assistance, and that you can make a Shift to live without Him: Whereas GOD feeds us from Hand to Mouth, and hath not left any Stores with us, that we may make our Address to Him Night and Day, who must water us every Moment. Poor Souls, did you but see your Dangers, by Reason of the three
Brigades

Brigades of Enemies, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, you would not be so Fool-hardy, to venture abroad until you have besought God to help poor, indigent Creatures: Remember, You want as soon as you wake, and those Things you want, which none but God can supply: You need Divine Power to follow your Callings.

By neglecting this Season, the Devil and the World have often made you forget, or omit the Duty for the Day: You have no Leisure in the Morning, and what then? The Devil fills thy Hand with unexpected Business, that the Excuse grows stronger, and more plausible: But must we serve the Slave, and neglect the LORD of Glory?

BUT oh! what Hazard dost thou run, not only by preferring other Things and Business before God, but by neglecting the first Hour of the Day, when thou art not sure of a second? Thou proposest such an Hour to pray; but what is thy Life save a Vapour, which may expire before that Hour?



C H A P. XIV.

*The Miscarriages of those who do pray,
about Prayers,*

THERE is not only Ungodliness in not Praying, (Prayerless Souls worshipping God no more than Beasts) but in Praying amiss. And O! how many Ways do we fail about this Duty, both before, and in, and after?

First, How do many fail before their Entrance upon this Duty of Prayer?

1. *By Neglect of Meditation*: Few can say, *Consider my Meditation*. Have not we rushed upon this Duty, before we have meditated of the GOD we were approaching to? What an holy GOD He is, and how unworthy we are to take his Name into our Mouths? What a consuming Fire He is, and what dry Stubble we are?

HAVE we not rushed into GOD's Presence, as the Horse rusheth into the Battle?

HAVE we considered, that his Eyes are piercing as Flames of Fire? That *all Things are naked and open* (as it were dissected) *before Him, with whom we have to do*? We have not set GOD before our Eyes. Our Thoughts would not be so low, so earthly, so distracted, did we believingly consider into whose Presence we are coming.

HAVE we consider'd GOD's Almightyness? That He can do more for us than we can ask or think? *He that cometh to GOD (in Prayer) should believe that GOD is, that He is the Strength of Israel*; that we are to beg of GOD, Pardon of Sin, and Victory over it, are Mercies beyond the Creatures Power; but *the LORD's Arm is not shortned, that He cannot help*.

HAVE we meditated on GOD's Bounty, Pity, and tender Compassions? As one more ready to give, than we to ask; as one who giveth liberally, and upbraids not with our oft coming? We want vast Thoughts of the Goodness and Mercy of GOD; we have base beggerly Thoughts of GOD,

as if we should trespass too much upon Him, and weary Him by coming too oft to his Door.

HAVE we mused upon the Faithfulness of GOD? Who is under Engagements to relieve us, to ease us, to be found of us when we seek Him with our whole Hearts. *And this is the Confidence we have in Him, that if we ask any Thing according to his Will, He heareth us.*

HAVE we meditated of the Way, by whom we must come to GOD? How daring are Souls to venture on an absolute GOD? How is the new and consecrated Way neglected? How is *Christ* laid by, as if there were no Need of a Mediator, or of an *Advocate with the Father*? How seldom do we pass thro' *Golgotha* to the heavenly *Jerusalem*; and see that *none can come to the Father, but by the Son*? We see not our Need of Incense and Odours to be mingled with our Sacrifices: Little do we consider, that the Opportunity of speaking with GOD is the Price of Blood, of the precious Blood of the Son of GOD.

HAVE we meditated on our Sins, on those to which we are by Nature and Custom most addicted; and of those with which we have since the last Duty polluted our Souls? From the Want of Meditation hereof, ariseth Formality in Duties; the Heart is not humbled in Confession, neither is the Soul importunate with the LORD for Pardon and Victory.

HAVE we made Conscience to meditate upon our Wants, what Graces we most needed, what we are most defective in? From this Neglect we pray as if we did not pray, without Zeal, Earnestness and Importunity: Whereas, had we view-
ed

ed our Wants of GOD, of his Grace, Spirit, Protection, Mercy and Presence, we should pray as for Life; and those straggling vain Thoughts would hereby have been suppressed. When the Malefactor is begging his Life at the Bar, his Soul is not running adrift after every Feather, but he minds his Business; it is Life, and his Life that is in Danger; and therefore he gathers up all possible Arguments that may induce the Judge to abate of the Rigour of Justice. But how oft have we been on our Knees, and have been ignorant of what ails us, so that we might truly say, we knew not what to ask? When you go to your Markets, you consider what you and yours want; but do we so when we go to our spiritual Markets?

HAVE not we neglected to meditate of the Mercies of GOD, which we have received? Hence we come either customarily before GOD, or not with that holy Boldness, as we should. One Mercy opens a Door to another: *The Valley of Achor was given as a Door of Hope to Israel*: Forgetting the Returns of Prayer, makes our Hearts ach, and Knees faint. We should book the Passages of GOD's Grace, how He remembered us in our low Condition, how He hath visited us Day by Day; when we have come in as the parched Ground, we have found GOD a Dew to us, and Springs of Water have appeared in the Wilderness: When we have come in before GOD with our Shackles on our Feet, with Irons that have entered our Souls, GOD hath made it a Jubilee, He hath proclaimed the acceptable Year, He hath let us out of the Prison-house, and hath set our Feet in a large Place: When we have come in before GOD with Guilt on our Souls, and with fearful Expectations, how hath GOD given us the white Stone, and sent us away with his Blessing,

and with Gladness of Heart? The Neglect of our Diaries of the Providences and Mercies of GOD, makes us more like Slaves than Children.

HAVE not we neglected to meditate on the great and wonderful Things that have been done upon the Prayers of GOD's People? We should have in everlasting Remembrance, what a powerful Engine Prayer is. It hath *beld the Hands of the Almighty: Jacob and Moses prevailed over GOD: It hath been a Key to open and shut the Heavens; Elias was a Man subject to like Passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly, that it might not rain, and it rained not on the Earth by the Space of three Years and six Months: And he prayed again, and the Heaven gave Rain, and the Earth brought forth her Fruit.* And O what wonderful Things hath GOD promised to a praying People! *Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty Things, which thou knowest not. Whatsoever ye ask in my Name, I will do it.* Here was more than Herod offered; that was but *half the Kingdom*; here is a *Whatsoever*. Did we appear before GOD with these Instances of Grace and Promises fresh in our Thoughts, we should not say, *What a Weariness is it?* Or that *there is no Profit in serving GOD*; and gallop through our Duties as we are wont.

2. ANOTHER Neglect before Prayer, is, *The not stirring up our Graces, before we set upon the Duty.* We too much rest on habitual Preparation, whereas actual is necessary. He that leaps immediately from the Shop to the Throne of Grace, and labours not to quicken his dull Soul, and to leave worldly Business behind him, no Wonder if he lose the Duty, and provoke the LORD, rather than be accepted with Him. The Well

Well is seldom so full, but that you may, nay you must, throw in a little to fetch up the more. It is thought, by the redoubling of *David's Charge*, that he found not his Heart in a good Frame, for exalting God, and therefore cries out so vehemently, *Bless the LORD, O my Soul, and all that is within me praise his holy Name: Praise the LORD, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits.*

Secondly, How have we failed, when we have entered upon the Duty? And that in Invocation, in Confession, in Petition, and in Thanksgiving?

1. In our Invocation? We call God Father, and yet how unlike are we unto Him; we resemble not Him we call Father; we reverence not Him we call Father; we trust not in Him with that Confidence we would in our Fathers of the Flesh; we fear, when we ask Bread, he will give us a Stone: we have lower Thoughts of God's Bowels than our own; we think ourselves more pitiful than God Himself: If I were a Mother, and my Child in Distress, I should deny him nothing.

2. In our Confessions of Sin? We are not full, and free, and ingenuous: We sit with *Rachel* upon some Idols: We do not declare our Ways unto Him, but rather cover our Transgressions as *Adam*. Few can clear themselves as *Job* did. You will perhaps confess, *We have erred and strayed from thy Ways like lost Sheep*; but still in generals. *David* was in this gravelled, *When I kept Silence, my Bones waxed old, through my Roaring all the Day long*. But you descend not to Particulars, or if to Particulars, yet the *Benjamin* is reserved; loth to let *Benjamin* go, loth to confess Envy, Pride, Breach of Vows, Want of Love, or loving the

Rich only, neglecting the Poor. You will confess what every Man knows you are guilty of, or what every Man is addicted to; but you shame not yourselves, by instancing in the particular Neglects and Omissions, by which you chiefly provoke the LORD: The *Agags* are not brought to Execution, the best of the Cattle are kept back, one Wedge is hid in the Tent. Or if you confess particularly, yet it is without Hatred of the Sins confessed: You confess Sin, yet hug it, plead for it, within one Quarter of an Hour! You confess Sin, but without Self-abhorrence; you loath it not as the Plague of your Hearts. *I abhor myself*, saith *Job*: This implies a Dislike, an Hatred, an Indignation against, an utter Alienation from, and an Opposition against Sin. God knows how little of this is mixed with the Confessions of most Persons.

3. IN *their Petitions*? Both Matter, and Manner, and End? Have not we been faulty in the Matter? Have they been always for the best Things? Life, Liberty, Estate are desired; but Grace, Victory over Pride, Passions, and Worldliness lie unsought for. We fail also, when we pray simply that we may not suffer; for there is no Foundation in the Promise for such a Prayer, and we may not pray, save for what God hath promised.

HAVE not we failed in the Manner? Have we always prayed with Earnestness, Humility, Faith, and Sincerity? Hath the whole Man been employed? Few can say, *With my whole Heart have I entreated thy Favour*. Alas! few pray effectually. The Heart and Soul are not at work in the Duty. It is the effectual fervent Prayer that avails. We pray as if we had a Mind God should deny

us. We are too much like Children, scribbling over a Piece of Paper, which when they have done, they lay it aside, or tear it, or think no more of it. We have not continued in Prayer; we have not backed our Prayers with Prayers, reinforced them; we have soon fainted; we have not been the right Seed of *Jacob*, *I will not let Thee go, until Thou bless me*: We soon faint, and our Desires expire.

HAVE we not failed in the End? May I not say as the Apostle *James*, *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your Lusts*. Hath not our Level been too low? We should have made God's Glory our End, and we have made our Self, barely to quiet Conscience, or to obtain Pardon of Sin, rather than Purity of Heart and Life. You have been perhaps earnest for the Pardon of your own and *England's* Sins, and yet selfish in all: You fear (and well you may) temporal Plagues, you are afraid that *Sodom's* Sins may bring down Fire and Brimstone; and therefore, for your own Sakes, rather than God's, you pray, and with some Vehemency; but your End is still too low. Never do you pray aright, till you pray more for *Christ's* Sake, than for your own; for his Glory, rather for your own present, future, temporal, or eternal Advantage. It is one Thing to seek ourselves, and another Thing to seek God in a Duty.

4. In our Thanksgivings? Who is free from Guilt in the gratulatory Part of Prayer? Some bless God for Justification and Sanctification, and are Strangers to these Privileges, yea, if catechised know not what these Mercies are, no more than Parrots know what they prattle: Others, if like the Lepers they are cleansed, yet return not to bless the Lord: They are large in Petitions, but very

very sparing in their Praises. Unthankful Beggars are an Abomination to God and Man. We should be thankful for the least Mercy; but tho' we have had the Honour to be admitted in the Presence Chambers as Favourites, yet we are sullen, and slow to return Praises for so great a Vouchsafement: You have not come to dry Breasts, you are every Day full of Mercy; but alas! *You render not according to what you have received, therefore Wrath is against you.* Hast thou had no Meltings in Prayer, no Enlargements, no Desires to fear the LORD, no Importunities, no Wrestlings? Why yet it is Mercy, that thou livest upon the Patience and Bounty of GOD: It is much that thou shouldst have a Being, and be preserved to this Day; It is a Wonder He should feed thee, cloath thee, protect thee, strive with thee, suffer thee, who art but Dust and Ashes, to speak with Him: The last Night thou mightest have lain on a Bed of Fire, or by the Hedge, or have been in the great Deep; but alas! few so ready to praise as to pray. We are too much like the Vagabonds, when we have what we come for, away we go, and come no more 'till pinching Necessity drives us: Yea, we too often aggravate our Miseries, and overlook the Benefits we enjoy, that are mixed with our Crosses.

Thirdly, How have we, when our Prayers have been ended, failed of our Duties toward God, by running Post-haste from the Throne of Grace to the World? Not considering how our Hearts were in Time of Duty, whether straitned, or enlarged, whether composed or distracted, whether we had the Face of GOD towards us, or his Face veiled, whether we were lively or lifeless, dead or quickened, serious or light, what Faith was stirring, what Repentance exercised? The Church
and

and People of God observed their Hardness in Duty: *Why hast Thou hardened our Hearts from thy Fear?* We should look back upon our Prayers, that we may be humbled for all our vain Thoughts, Untowardness, Distractions, and Unbelief in the Duty; and we should do it, then, whilst we are in the highest Capacity to know the Miscarriages of the Soul, what the aggravating Circumstances thereof are: And not only in order to Humiliation, but Reformation, that for the future we may not dare to touch the Mount of God's Presence with such beastly Frames.

In case we were in a good Frame in the Duty, did we labour to retain the Influences of the Ordinance upon our Hearts? Did not we let the Fire go out again? Have not we, like some in a great Sweat, gone into the open Air too soon, and took a Cold? That is dangerous. *David* was more careful to maintain his fresh and lively Frames, and therefore he entreated the LORD to *keep the same in his Servant's Heart for ever.*

How have we been faulty in not believing that our Prayers shall be answered? We direct our Prayers unto God, but we do not look up 'till God look down. We do not hearken what God the LORD will speak. *Paul* observed how long the LORD was silent to his Prayer, *For this I besought the LORD thrice, and yet no Answer.* O! when shall we resolve with *Habbakkuk*, to stand upon our Watch, and look and see what He will say to us? The Neglect of this hath bred so many Formalists in our Congregations. After we have put our Prayers into God's Hands, we never mind them more. We would be angry with Beggars, if they begg'd an Alms, and away presently, as careless of Answers.

THE

THE Sincerity of thy Heart would be more evidenced, if thou didst consider what Returns thou hast that thou mayst bless God for them, and improve them for God, and in Case of Denials, be of a troubled Spirit as *Hannah* was, for that her Prayer for a Child was so long denied.

WHAT Mournings hast thou for that thy Pride, Worldliness, Unbelief, and Hardness of Heart, are not yet pardoned and subdued? Thou continuest in the Road of Duty, but observest not whether God hears thee or not. *Saul* went beyond thee: He observed, and was troubled, that God answered him not by *Urim*, nor yet by *Prophets*. Have not we by Carelessness, by returning to our Vomit and Mire, intercepted our own Prayers?

HAVE not we torn our own Petitions, and snatch'd them out of God's Hands? Behold the Lord's Hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is his Ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your Iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your Sins have hid his Face from you, that He will not hear.

How seldom have we took *Bernard's* Advice in his Gloss upon, *Let us lift up our Hearts with our Hands*; that is (saith he) let us pray and endeavour. We love to employ God to subdue our Sins; but we sit idle, we hate taking Pains; we are not Co-workers with God. Prayer is a Key to open Heaven to Believers; but it may be so managed, as to open Hell to thee.

CHAP. XV.

*Their slighting the written Word of God,
especially in not reading and meditating
on it as they ought.*

SLIGHTING of the written Word of God is another Piece of Ungodliness, which English Professors of Religion have been very guilty of. There is not a surer Sign of despising any Person, than the setting light by what he saith unto us; for according to the Honour we give unto the Speaker, the Words spoken will be of Weight with us. But alas! how hath the Bible, God's written Word, been undervalued by us?

How little have we credited God's written Word? And yet it is natural for us to believe whatsoever is said by one, of whose Truth we are confident. Have not Scripture Affirmations been doubted of by us? How little hath our Knowledge of them been attended with building a Christian Life upon them as a Foundation? Have we believed, that Scripture Commands come from God, and are most just and fit for Him to lay upon us? Hath this Belief brought forth Obedience? Have we believed that Scripture Threats are God's Threats, and will therefore be performed to every impenitent Sinner? And hath this Belief kept us from Sin, or promoted Repentance? Have Scripture Promises been believed to be God's Promises, and that therefore all shall certainly be performed to those that perform the Conditions? And hath this Belief

Belief stirred us up, and helped us to perform the Conditions?

GOD hath magnified his Word, above all his Name; but so have not we. We are apt to be afraid at the Appearances of GOD in the Scripture? And yet GOD appears more in the Glory of his Majesty therein, than in all his other Works, whether of Creation, or of common Providence. GOD maketh more Account of his written Word than of Heaven and Earth: He had rather lose Heaven and Earth than one Jot or Tittle of his Word.

BUT have not we accounted it no great Matter to swerve a little from the written Word of GOD? Yea, have not we made a light Matter of leaving undone what is therein required, and of doing what is therein forbidden? Were the Scriptures high in our Esteem, did we look upon GOD's Testimonies as wonderful Things, our very Souls would be in keeping them? Thy Testimonies are wonderful, therefore doth my Soul keep them.

HAVE not we been willingly and contentedly ignorant of Scripture Discoveries? So is not the Scholar of those Notions which he valueth. Have not our Hearts cryed out many Times unto the Bible, Depart from us, for we desire not the Knowledge of GOD's Ways, either as to Worship or Manners, and that because Knowledge is an Obligation, yea a Provocation to Duty, and a Sting in Case Duty be neglected?

How have we been guilty of not reading the Scriptures as we ought? That every one ought to read them, is so evident, that there is no Way for the Papists to keep Men from believing this Truth, but by keeping them from reading the Scripture.

No

No Business can discharge us from this Duty, and yet how is this Duty neglected?

MANY, notwithstanding their Resolutions, never set upon reading the Bible over: They have seen no Excellency in this Book; they have seen more in a Piece of Philosophy, in a rational Discourse of Divinity, in an ingenious History, in a politick Discourse, yea in a Play; Politician like, who preferred an Ode in *Pindar* before *David's* Psalms.

How many read the Bible too seldom, thinking it too much to read it daily, to spend one Hour therein every Day? Have not some spent several Hours in a Day, in reading some good Books of Mens inditing, but not a Quarter of an Hour in reading GOD's Book? "I even hate mine own Works (said *Luther*) and oft Times wish they were burnt; because I fear lest they should withdraw Men from reading the Scriptures."

How much greater is the Number of those that have not read the Bible aright? Are nor all of us of this Number? When have we prepared for the reading of the Scriptures, as becomes those that are going in unto GOD, (so going into the Sanctuary, where the Word of GOD was kept, is termed)?

HAVE not we read fearlessly? When we were going to take the Bible into our Hands, have we trembled at the Word, lest we should not sanctify the Name of GOD; yea, lest we should take the Name of GOD in vain in our Reading?

HAVE not we read heedlessly? Not diligently, marking the Duties commanded, the Sins forbidden,

bidden, the Rewards promised, and the Punishments threatned therein? Have not our Thoughts been wandering, and not fixed upon what we read? When did we attend to Scripture Words, as heedfully, as *Benbadad's* Messengers did to the Words of *Ahab*?

HAVE not we read unbelievingly? Not believing that the Spirit of God, the Inditer of every Word in this Book, did particularly intend our Good in every Verse; that in the Scripture, Life and Death is set before us; yea, that Scripture Words are our Life?

HAVE not we read for wrong Ends? Either to satisfy our Curiosity, and not to regulate our Hearts and Lives: Or to have Matter of Discourse, but not Matter of Practice; to have Scripture at our Tongues End, not in our Hearts; or only to know, being ashamed to be ignorant of those Things, which all Christians know; and to be able to say nothing of such Matters, which we cannot but have Occasion divers Times in Company to talk of, but not to do? When did we read the Scriptures with this particular Intention, that they might be a *Lamp unto our Feet, and a Light unto our Paths*? That we might thereby be help'd to order our Conversation aright? When did we read the Bible with the same Attention, Reverence, and Resolution, to follow every Rule therein, as we think we would if we had lived when *Christ* was upon Earth, received a Letter from Him, directing us what to believe and do, that we might be saved? Or as we think we should a Book writ immediately by the Finger of God, as He wrote the Ten Commandments in two Tables? Why, the

the Bible is God's Letter to every one of us in particular, written by Himself, though mediately: *I have written to him the great Things of my Law:* To him, it is in the singular Number, because to every Man and Woman particularly. When did we read the Bible, as Children read the last Will and Testament of their deceased Parent?

HAVE not we read the Scripture, without begging of God his Spirit, to help us to understand what we read, and to practise what we understand; at least, not so importunately, as we would, if we had been begging for our Lives, at the Bar of a Judge? Have not we sown this Seed among Thorns, in unplowed Hearts, and have not so much as prayed to God, to take away the Heart of Stone, and to give an Heart of Flesh, a teachable, pliable, tractable Spirit, ready to receive every Divine Impression? O! when shall we make Conscience of Reading the Scriptures daily as we ought? "The Emperor of Heaven (saith Gregory the Great) the LORD of Angels and Men hath sent to you, that which concerns your Life, and will you (still) neglect to read it with a Fervent and zealous Spirit?"

How guilty have we been in not meditating on the Word of God as we ought? How little, if at all, have we dwelt in our serious Thoughts upon the Matters contained in the Word of God, to the End we might understand how much they concern us, and that our Hearts may thereby be raised to holy Affections and Resolutions? Though Meditation be commanded as a chief Means sanctified by God for the keeping of his Word; though we cannot be

holy and happy without it altogether; though it be one of the profitablest Duties of a Christian; though it be the Duty by which the Soul digesteth Truths, and draweth forth their Strength for its Nourishment and Refreshment; yea the Duty by which all other Duties are improved; yet how much is this Duty neglected by all Sorts of Men, because though it be delightful to the Spirit, yet it is tedious to the Fleth?

HAVE not many been long Professors of Religion, and yet if they would tell the Truth, they never spent one Hour together in meditating on the most weighty Scripture Truths, on God, on Man's Estate by Creation, the Fall, Regeneration, on *Christ*, on the Vanity of the Creature, on the Beauty of Holiness, on Death, on Judgment, on Heaven, and Hell?

How few have managed this Duty aright? Hath not that which we call Meditation been Study only? Hath not some controversial Point, or some nice Speculation been the Matter of our Meditation? Hereby we evidence that we have not so great spiritual Hunger after Righteousness, as we should: "Hungry Men (saith one) do not use to stand and pick Bones, when they have Meat enough to eat." Hath not our End in meditating been only the increasing our Knowledge, and not the improving our Knowledge? Have not we begun this Work without God? When we were going about to meditate, have not we neglected Prayer for Help from Heaven to go through with the Work, though without God we can neither know, resolve upon, nor perform what is good; for from Him, yea from his own good Pleasure comes both the Will and the

the Deed? Have not we idled away our meditating Seasons? If we have sequestred ourselves from worldly Businesses, and Company, for Meditation at any Time, by suffering our Thoughts to wander up and down to no Purpose, to be sure not to fetch in Considerations for the stamping holy Impressions upon our Hearts and Lives? Have not we in meditating been without a due Sense of God's Presence? May not we cry out, surely the LORD was in such and such a Place where I have been meditating, and I knew it not, *i. e.* I considered it not? Hath not the Work of our Understanding, in this Business, been to retain, and not to convey Truth into the Heart? Have our Understandings represented what should work holy Affections and Resolutions aright? Have they presented Things good, of a Divine and Heavenly Nature as GOD, *Christ*, and Heaven in their Beauty? Have they presented Things in their Nature, simply Evil; as Sin, GOD's Wrath, Hell, at their worst? Have not we left off meditating before we attained the End of Meditation, before holy Affections and Resolutions were wrought? Have not we rush'd out of this Duty as well as rush'd into it? Have not we gone from this Work, as a Bird out of the Snare, with Joy and Speed? Have not we ended as well as begun this Work without GOD? Not praying to GOD for Strength to perform, what we have been enabled by Grace to resolve upon for GOD; and for Pardon of what hath been amiss in the Duty? O! when will we be prevailed with to make Conscience of this Duty of Duties? "I once more intreat thee, to use Mr. *Baxter's* Words, As thou art a Man that maketh Conscience of a reavealed Duty, and that da- rest not wilfully resist the Spirit, and as thou art faithful to the Peace and Prosperity of

chief Instrument, whereby GOD makes Souls Partakers of the Divine Nature.

1. *How little do we believe the Truth of the Promises?* How little do we believe that the Spirit of GOD and Glory rests on them that suffer for Christ, and his Gospel? And that as Tribulations abound for Christ, so shall Consolations by Him? Or that we shall have an hundred fold Advantage by any Loss we sustain for Christ? All that Fear of Man; all that Cowardice; all those Tremblings of Heart, that are upon us this Day; all that Enmity against the Cross of Christ, which appears on the Faces, and Hearts of Men, are clear Demonstrations how little the Promises for the bearing up under Suffering, for the Deliverance out of Suffering, or rewarding of Suffering for Christ are believed: We cannot set the Promises against all Crosses.

2. *How low is our Esteem of the Promises of GOD, of the great and faithful GOD, in Comparison of what they are concerning the Promises of honest and sufficient Men?* I appeal to thee, if the King should promise thee a thousand Pounds per Annum, whether it would not more rejoice thine Heart, then the Promises which GOD hath made unto thee, do? With how few are the Promises of GOD exceeding great and precious?

3. *How little do we admire at GOD's stooping so low, as to oblige Himself in Promise to such as we?* GOD might have dealt with us by Way of absolute Sovereignty and Dominion, imposing Commands to do our Duty, without adjoining any Promise of Reward, He being our Creator, and we his Creatures. It is his great Condescension

scension, to deal with us by Way of Promise, which is not only a Signification of what He will do, but a laying a Bond or Obligation upon Himself to do so and so. And yet how little are we in Admiration ?

4. *How little do we bless the LORD for those Jewels, that are wrapt up in the Promises ?* For the Fruit, that hangs on this Tree of Life ? *This is the Promise, that he hath promised us, even eternal Life.* A Crown is promised : *He shall receive a Crown of Life, which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him.* A Kingdom is promised : *Hearken, my beloved Brethren, hath not GOD chosen the Poor of this World, rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom, which He hath promised to them that love Him ?* Yet how unthankful ? This doubtless proceeds from our Diffidence of the Faithfulness of the Promiser, and therefore that shall be another Question.

5. *How little do we rely upon GOD, to make good his Promises ?* How many think GOD the Promiser, as changeable as themselves ? Men in Boats, being in constant Motion upon the Waters, are apt to fancy, that the Land and Trees move, as they themselves do : So many Christians think, as oft as they fail, GOD will fail too. Who lays all the Stress upon the Faithfulness of Him that hath promised ? Do not we lean partly to our own Endeavours, and the Means we use, and so divide our Dependencies betwixt the Promises of GOD, and our own Duties, to bring in Pardons and Peace ?

6. *Do not we eye Promises, without eyeing Christ ?* Do not we dote upon the Bracelets, but neglect the Friend ? Do not some set a greater value on the Promise

Promise, than on *Christ's* Person? Though the Promises are only *the Chryſtal Streams of that River of Life, which proceedeth out of the Throne of God, and the Lamb*; yet do not we make them the primary, and not the ſecondary Object of Faith? Who look upon Promiſes only as Inſtruments, to bring *Chriſt* and the Soul together?

7. How little do we wait, 'till that Good, which is in the Promiſes, be given out to us? Ye have Need of Patience, that after ye have done the Will of GOD, ye may receive the Promiſe. Sure, *The Viſion is for an appointed Time*, and GOD would have us to wait, though it tarry; becauſe it will not tarry beyond the Time appointed by the wiſe and faithful GOD: But, though GOD never fail of his own Time, yet He ſeldom comes to ours; and then we run into Unbelief, if not Impatience of Spirit. How oft do we antedate the Promiſe, and ſet it a Time before GOD's Time? Patience hath not its perfect work, ſo that if GOD ſave us out of our Miſeries, we ſhall not be able to ſay, *Lo, this is our GOD, we have waited for Him, and He will ſave us: This is the LORD, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his Salvation.* This limiting the Holy One of *Iſrael*, either as to Means, (when we tie up the LORD to work by Ways and Cauſes of our own) or to Days and Hours of our own bold and impudent Preſcription, is no ſmall Provocation. *How oft did they provoke Him in the Wilderneſs; and grieve Him in the Deſart? Yea, they turned back, and tempted GOD, and limited the Holy One of Iſrael.* Some will wait a Month or two for the Promiſe of Pardon, that they may have Peace in their Conſciences; but when they ſee nothing comes of their Waiting, then there is no Hope, why ſhould I wait on the LORD any longer? We allow Time to the Phyſician to cure us, we

we yield, that he knows the fittest Time to apply Cordials; but we yield not so much to God: We would have the smarting Plaister pulled off, before the Wound be healed; whereas it is best for us, to have it kept on. *David* waited patiently; but so do not we: Our Hearts are not at Rest, but we stagger like Drunkards; we reel this Way, and that Way, but are not established: In this we are not confident, that God who hath promised, cannot lie, and therefore will perform the Word, that is gone forth from an unfeigned Lip: We are too hasty in our Desires, whereas God knows the fittest Season for the Promise to bring forth: We shall have it, when the Time is come; but we hasten the Birth, and spoil the Conception. The Prophet of old, complains of some, that they were of an hasty Heart: Whereas, *He that believeth, maketh not Haste.* God defers, to put an Edge on our Desires, a Value on what is promised, and to exercise our Faith.

8. How many have abused, rather than applied Promises? How many abuse the Mercy of God, so that even the Promises become an Occasion of Stumbling, whilst they continue in Sin, in Hopes of Pardon? We are not led by the Sweetness of the Promise to Repentance; but rather harden our Hearts, presuming of Pardons on Course from the God of Grace: Many continue to Sin that Grace may abound: Hence Repentance is put off. The Promises are not made a Sanctuary unto which Men fly from Sin, but as a Sanctuary to protect them in their sinful Courses. Do not we eye Promises, and yet hate Commands? Do not we mind temporal Promises, with the neglect of spiritual, and therein disparage God, by setting a deeper Value on Earth than on Heaven, on our Back and Bellies, than on God?

Do

Do not we eye the Promises that speak of Mercy, and pass over those that lead to Duty? View with Pleasure pardoning Promises, but neglect the Promises of sprinkling us with clean Water, and that *Sin shall not have Dominion over us*? We like it, that God should be our God; but we love not to be GOD's People. We take hold of Promises, but we forget the Condition: *If my People, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my Face, and turn from their evil Ways.* Little is that minded by us, which the Prophet speaks, *At what Instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom to build and to plant it, if it do Evil in my Sight, that it obey not my Voice, then I will repent of the Good wherewith I said I would benefit them.* We love, promised Mercies, but we overlook the preparatory Duties of Fasting, Praying, Repenting and Reforming our Hearts and Ways. GOD hath linked his Promises and our Seeking together. *Thus saith the LORD GOD, I will yet for this be enquired of by the House of Israel, to do it for them:* But how many of us do either altogether neglect, or slothfully go about to perform the Condition of the Promise? Are not some of us altogether Strangers to Faith, the Condition of the whole Covenant of Grace? We never gave ourselves unto the LORD, yet run away with the Promises of Forgiveness; though ignorant of the Mediator betwixt GOD and sinful Creatures, though full of Pride and high Conceits of our own Righteousness, yet we boast *Abraham* is our Father, the Promises are ours. How do the Promises of GOD make some slothful in the Use of appointed Means? How formal in Duties are we? May it not be said of us, as of the Image, there is somewhat wanting within? Are not we silly Doves without Heart? Are not we
bolstered

bolstered up with the Promises? O! these Pillows under our Heads make us slumbring Virgins: All is well, GOD is merciful, but we do not sweat and get our Living by Labour, we strive not to *enter in at the straight Gate.*

9. *How nice and curious are some in applying of Promises?* They take no Pleasure in any Promises, but such as they think no Hand touched before their own: They neglect the plain, clear, open Promises of the Gospel; and if any be more abstruse, and hard to be found out, by an ordinary Eye, they are greedily suck'd in: They are only or mainly for mystical Promises. Such think they are delighted with the Goodness of the Promise, whereas they are only pleased with the Newness of it, or with their own Invention, and that they can see farther into a Mill-stone than another. I have known some of these, and I have seen what is become of them; their Pride and Affectation hath ed them also from the plain Paths of Holiness.

10. *How many will not close with a Promise, 'till the Thing promised be found within them?* Because their Hearts are so corrupt, therefore they will not apply the Promises of purifying the Heart: Whereas there is no Way to get their corrupt Hearts cleansed, but by laying hold on such Promises; and the longer they keep off the Promise, the worse it will be with them: There is no other Way, but by this Ark, to escape drowning; and the longer they wander in this Wilderness, the more hard it will be to enter into Canaan.

11. *Do not we pretend to eye the Promises, and yet use indirect Means to bring our Devices to pass?*

pass? We have pretended to live the Life of Faith; but GOD knows what wicked (at least questionable) Courses Men have taken; how much Evil hath been done, that Good may come. Have not we, to help GOD's Promises to bring forth, turned out of GOD's Way, offered Violence to known Laws, wronged Conscience, forgot all Obligations upon us, regarded nothing that stood in our Way of compassing our Designs?

12. *How little do we examine the Fruits of GOD's Promises in our own Souls? The exceeding great and precious Promises are given, that we might be Partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the Corruption that is in the World through Lust: That we might purify ourselves, even as GOD is Pure: But do we look for those Ends to be attained by the Promises in our Souls? Do we look not only for a Change from Looseness to Civility, but a thorough Sanctification in Body, Mind, and Spirit? Alas! which of us can say, Having these Promises, we cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and perfect Holiness in the fear of GOD?*



C H A P. XVII.

Their Abuse of Providence.

ABUSE of Providence is another Branch of Ungodliness. GOD is to be honoured, not only as the chief Good, and as the supreme Truth and Authority; but as the first Cause that giveth

eth Being to all Things, and therefore ordereth and disposeth of all Things as He pleaseth: But O! how is GOD dishonoured, by abusing his Providence? The blind World are not only guilty, who do not acknowledge GOD at the other End of Causes, as swaying all Things by his Wisdom and Power, but set up an Idol called Chance; but even Professors, eminent Professors of Religion, are herein very guilty.

1. *How seldom do we observe GOD's Providence?* The Finger of GOD is in all the Creatures; not only we, but all Creatures live, move, and have their Being, from GOD, and in GOD: The whole Course of Nature moves as it is turned by the Hand of GOD, and directed by his Counsel: It is not with the Work of GOD, as with the Artificer's Clock, which, put into a Frame, and hang'd with Weights, will go, though the Artificer be off from it; but though GOD set all the Creatures in Frame, yet the Motion of every Wheel depends on GOD. There is not a Drop of Rain falls, 'till GOD utter his Voice, and cause the Vapours to ascend from the Ends of the Earth: Yet how is GOD not minded? *We see not his Footsteps: He passeth this Way, and that, and we see Him not.* Our Eyes are held to second Causes: We look when the Wind, or Moon, will Change; but we are so Short-sighted, that we reach not GOD. How seldom do we consider, that though GOD's Providence doth deliver up his choicest Friends, into the hands of his and their Enemies, yet doth it not deliver them up unto their Will: they cannot do what they please, but only what pleaseth GOD: Such are still *engraven on the Palms of his Hands*, though turned over into the Hands of the Ungodly; they are GOD's Favourites still, though the Wicked say, *Persecute them, and take them, for GOD*
bath

hath forsaken them. How little do we Mind, that our Times are in GOD's Hands; and that as Satan is in a Chain, so are his Instruments: We fear Men more than GOD. O! when shall we hear that Word of GOD, *Say not a Confederacy to all them to whom this People shall say a Confederacy; neither fear ye their Fear, nor be afraid: Sanctify the LORD of Hosts Himself, and let Him be your Fear, and let Him be your Dread?*

2. How little are we affected with the continual Course of Providence, though it guards and keeps us every Moment? The Stars in their Courses would fight against us; the Sea would break in as a Devourer; the Beasts of the Field would arm against us, if GOD did not check them, and bind them; yea, one man would eat up another, were it not for the LORD, who sets Bounds to the Rage of all the Creatures. It is the Eye of Jealousy that is still wakeful for us; it is the LORD, that *puts the Hook into the Nose*, and the Bridle in the Lips, of the Senacheribs of the World; and yet how little are our Hearts affected? How little are they comforted, how little do they cleave unto the LORD?

On the contrary: How distrustful are we of GOD's Providence, in a Time of seen Dangers, though we are wonderfully delivered from invisible ones every Day? Who can number the Legions of Devils? So many Deliverances hast thou by GOD's Providence every Moment; and yet how diffident are we, upon all new imminent outward Dangers? How little do we believe, that GOD will bring in Good to us, by such Providences as are ungrateful to Sense, to Flesh and Blood? Though nothing is more usual, than GOD to take away some Comforts, and lay in better Comforts; to take away

an *Abel*, and make it up in *Seth*: To deprive *Noah* of the Comforts of the whole World for a while, and then to wash it from its Filthiness, and to deliver him the Possession of it, with manifest Proofs of his singular Care of him and his Family, whilst all the rest of the Creatures perished in the Waters: To deprive *Mary* and *Martha* of their Brother *Lazarus*, and to return him from the Dead with Advantage: To deprive *Job* of his Children and Estate, to make his last Days better than his first, and to give him *twice as much as he had before*; yet how little can we trust Providence in such Cases? How hardly were the Disciples persuaded, that the Absence of their LORD should be supplied in the Spirit? And yet saith *Christ*, *Nevertheless I tell you the Truth, it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.* *Christ* in his Spirit, dwelling in our Hearts, is better than *Christ* in Flesh, dwelling in our Houses.

NOTHING more usual with GOD than to make the Loss of one Comfort, the Means of enjoying another with Advantage, yea with the Advantage of *the hundred fold*: But alas! most fear they shall be Losers by *Christ* and for *Christ*. GOD seldom proceeds in a direct Way to his Ends, *i. e.* in a right Way, to our Apprehensions, in such a Way as we would have Him go in; but He leads us about, as he did *Israel*, and yet that was the right Way indeed; though the Means seem to oppose the End; yet He works to the Praise of his Name: He can write right by a crooked Pen, and bring Honey out of the Carcass of the Lion: But O! how little do we trust Providence when the Means are not probable to effect our expected End? Who believes *there shall be Light in the Evening*? And that *Sarah shall have a Posterity as the Stars in the Firmament*?

Firmament for Multitude, and as the Sand on the Sea-shore, which is innumerable? Who will think that the Sun and the Stars should bow to Joseph, when he lies in the Pit, or is in the Dungeon of the Heathen King? How unseemly is the Behaviour of many, if Providence thwarts them in taking away a Child, an Husband, an Estate? How discouraged and cast down are we, as if God in his Providence had pulled down that, which He could never build again, or rooted up that which He could never plant again? O! how few believe that if God pull down their Brick-houses, that He will build them again of hewn Stones, and that if He consume their Fir-trees, He will build again with Cedars? Whence is all our Dejectedness under Cross-Providences, but from our not believing that all Things are disposed by the wise and gracious Providence of God? We believe not enough that the Eyes of our loving Father run to and fro throughout the Earth to shew Himself marvellous for our Help in a Time of Need and Danger. Few can say, God is our Refuge and Strength; a very present Help in Trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the Earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea. Few believe that if the LORD be pleased to lay a great Burden upon their Shoulders, He will give great Strength, to bear it, and if He gives but little Strength, He will surely proportion the Burden to it. Whence are all our Uproars of Spirit, and Disquietness of Heart, but from our not trusting Providence? When God is working Desolation, did we see it his work, we would be still. David was so, when provoked by Shimei. God hath bid Shimei curse. Abisha was not so much concerned in the Affront, as David; but he sees not God in the Lips of Shimei, and therefore his Spirit is inflamed.

ALL Revenge in the Hearts of Men one against another may be attributed to Man's Blindness and injudicious View of Things; they see not the Wicked to be GOD's Sword to let out their Corruption; they do not believe that GOD intends to pursue gracious Designs by such Instruments. How silent should we be, yea how full of Praises, if by an Eye of Faith we saw the End of GOD in all his Providences? *Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I keep thy Word: I know, O LORD, that thy Judgments are right, and that Thou hast afflicted me in Faithfulness. He for our Profit, that we might be Partakers of his Holiness.*

3. *How oft have we made Providence an Argument to justify our Actions?* That because GOD doth not punish Us, therefore He loves us and approves of our Way? Whereas the Scriptures and Experience shew, *that there is a just Man that perissheth in his Righteousness, and there is a wicked Man that prolongs his Life in Wickedness:* Sometimes GOD's not punishing, is the greatest Punishment. *Jerome* observes, that GOD deals with us as *Parents* with *Children*, whilst there is any Hope of reclaiming them, they are corrected; but otherwise they are let alone, to do as they list. Or as *Physicians* continue their Applications, whilst there is any Hope of the *Patient's* Life; otherwise they let them alone. How do some bless themselves, that they never fasted and prayed as others, and yet they ride on Horseback, whilst others go on Foot. But what saith the Scripture; *Dives had his good Things here, and Lazarus evil: Dives fared deliciously every Day, his Misery is reserved to hereafter, as Lazarus his Comforts are reserved till Death.* It is a considerable Passage of a very learned Man, in weakening the late Position of some, *that GOD had borne Testimony to their Cause, by the many Victories* which

which He had given them. "This concluding of yours will by the same Reason infer that *Christianity* is not, and that *Mahometism* is true Religion; because when the *Turks* asserted one, and the *Greek-Church* the other, and that Difference begat a War betwixt them; the *Turks* were successful, and the *Greek-Church* subdued; and so remains to this Hour in that Captivity." *Do not all Things come alike to all?* And yet good Men have been stumbled at these Dispensations: When they see the Wicked walk on every Side (go where they please, and do what they please) they are apt, either to doubt of God's Providence, whether He governs the World, or to call in question whether they have any Relation to God's special Care. But do not we know that the Child is oft beaten, whilst the Servant or Stranger is spared? Do not we know that *Judgment begins at the House of God*, yea, and stays long there, and all that while the Tents of Ungodliness may be free? They may wax old and grow in *Wealth*; their *Seed* may be established. But all this they have with the Curse of God.

4. *THE more Providence hath favoured us, have not we the less rolled ourselves on the Covenant of Grace?* Hath not God had the less of our Dependance and Faith? Have not the Promises lain more neglected? So that God hath been even necessitated to draw in his Hand of Bounty, that, *when destitute, we may trust to Him. The Cisterns leak apace, that the Fountain may be in great Request.*

5. *How discontented are we to this Day with God's Providential Administrations toward us?* How do we prescribe to God? Some would be richer than they are; others more honourable: Some covet to be above others. We have bad Memories, or else we cannot but remember how ill
some

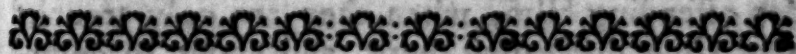
some of us improved our Talents of Power and Honour, when we had them. Is it reasonable that God should be charged for an hard Master for not entrusting ten Talents in our Hands, when we have been so unfaithful to our former Allotments? *Yefurun*-like we waxed fat, and never were more Beast-like, than when we were in the greenest Pastures. God would be charg'd even with Indiscretion, if He should commit more Talents again to thee, 'till thou art humbled for thy former Unfaithfulness.

6. *How do we take God's Work out of his Hands? How careful are we in many Things, though we should be careful in nothing? Though we cannot add one Cubit to our Stature by all our Cares; yet what Sollicitudes eat into our Hearts, and cut them in twain? We should serve Providence in the Use of Means, but should have nothing to do with the Issues and Events of the Means we use, but leave them to God. That which is not under our Power, should not be under our Care. All Things are ordered by the deliberate Counsel of God. I returned, and saw under the Sun, that the Race is not to the swift, nor the Battle to the strong, neither yet Bread to the wise, nor yet Riches to Men of Understanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill, but Time and Chance happeneth to them all.*

7. *How commonly do Men neglect the Providence of God, and betake themselves to their own Shifts to extricate themselves from their Miseries? Is Man wiser than God? And yet Men hope rather to help themselves by their own Wiles and Endeavours, than by leaning to the Providence of God. O! how have Men run to extraordinary Courses to deliver themselves out of their Miseries? For this, God may make our Land desolate and a perpetual*

tual Hissing, of Derision: He may justly scatter us as with an East Wind before the Enemy, and shew us the Back, and not the Face, in the Day of our Calamity.

8. HAVE not we been partial in viewing the Providence of GOD? Have not we taken some one Providence, and fixed our Eye upon it so long, 'till our Hearts have been even overwhelmed with Sorrow? But we have not viewed the Providences of GOD in their Contexture, nor in their Relation to gracious Ends for our good: Some take more notice of smiling Providences than of frowning, of what in Providence makes for them, and their Courses, than of what makes against them; but others take more Notice of frowning Providences than of smiling, of what makes against them, than of what makes for them. In this we have shewn ourselves Fools; for *who is wise shall understand these Things: Who? That is, few or none are such, and then there is an earnest Wish or Desire of the Prophet, O that Men were wise to understand these Things: The Ways of the LORD are right, though Men think them not so.*



C H A P. XVIII.

Their Hypocrisy.

HYPOCRISY is another Piece of Ungodliness, which, like Leaven, hath diffused itself far and wide. It is the greatest Ungodliness that can be, to rob the LORD of his Dominion over the Conscience. GOD is not honoured unless He be acknowledged

knowned as having the supreme Authority, not only over the Life, but the Heart; and therefore his Authority is never more undermined than by a meer Form of Godliness.

In how many hath the Tongue prayed, when not the Heart? These have been much in Fasting and Prayer, and thought themselves much wronged that they were not heard: But God gives them a Reason; *Ye shall not fast as ye do, to make your Voice to be heard on high.* The Hypocrite may lift up his Voice strongly, and yet never be heard: His Voice for Want of the Heart therein may never come up to God's Dwelling Place. How many tell God that they love Him, yea that they love Him with all their Hearts, whereas they flatter God with their Lips; they delight not in his Presence; yea, all the while they are serving their Turn on God? Fain they would partake of God's Bounty, of God's Protection, and God's Pardons, but they love neither God nor his Image: When God puts them to express their Love by Self-denial, then you shall see the Graves to be full of Rottenness; they hate to spend and to be spent for God. How many tell God that they are troubled for offending Him, when they are only troubled that He is displeasing them, and about to correct them for their Abuses of Him? They will cry out in Prayer, O my Carelessness! But alas! it is not Sin, but the Consequences of Sin, that disturb them. How will many tell God they fear Him, and his Judgments, when indeed they fear neither; witness their frothy, light Spirits and Conversations? How will they tell God that all the World is but as a Drop of a Bucket in Comparison of his Majesty; and yet they fear the Wrath of Man more than the Wrath of Almighty God? How many will tell God that they are contented with all his Will,

and

and yet their Hearts are full of inward Risings against the Providence of GOD? How many tell GOD they believe in Him, trust to his Mercy, depend on *Christ*, and all their Cares are cast on *Christ*; when GOD knows their Care and Work, like Bees, is to get Honey to their Hives; *they mind earthly Things*, and are scraping the Dust of the Valleys to themselves, as if they thought it their Wisdom rather to lean to their own providing, than to be beholden to the LORD? How earnest are some in their Cries to GOD for Victory over Sin; but secretly hate it not? And doth it not appear in this, for that having directed their Prayers to the LORD, they do not look up, to see whether the Corruption be more mortified, and their Love to it abated, yea or no?

How much Hypocrisy hath appeared in our Declaimings against others Sins? O! we must not suffer this; the House of GOD must be kept clean, it must not be made a Den of Thieves, a Cage of Uncleaness: And all this while their Zeal is nothing but Revenge; a secret Grudge there is against the Delinquent, and now that an Advantage offereth, they will have their Pennyworth out of him.

How many are always finding Faults, blaming Magistrates, Ministers, all but themselves? This Man wants Courage, and another wants another Grace, whilst they themselves want all Grace, as being meer Pieces of Pageantry. How many whining Hypocrites have we, that will in all Companies, especially where Ministers are, be crying out against the Baseness and Treachery of their own Hearts, and the Wickedness of their own Lives, and rest in their lazy Complaints, but reform not?

How

How severe are some in their Censures of Sin in others, as *Judah* against *Thamar*, she must be burnt? Who will now suspect *Judah* to be unclean? How ready have we been to judge and censure others, rather than ourselves? To behold a Mote in others, but not the Beam in ourselves? How many censure others for being talkative, and therefore would impose Silence upon others; because they have neither Heart nor Tongue themselves, to vindicate God, and to promote Religion?

How many are full of Persuasions of the Love of God, and of the Grace of God, and are yet ignorant of the first Principles of Christianity, Neglectors of Family Prayer, or Closet Duties? They think well of themselves, because in their Duties before Men, they are devout and zealous, but in their Closets they are straitned, and put the LORD off with a short Collect. How many are neat and cleanly when walking in the Views of others; but if you follow them Home to their Houses and Chambers, how nasty, how foul are they? How many are there whose Religion lies in their Face, Habit, Gesture; seem demure, humble, walk with their Eyes looking downwards, bow with *Absalom* to the People, and yet their Hearts full of Pride and Loftiness?

How hath Hypocrisy followed thee from the Corners of the Streets to the very Closet? Thou hast shut thy Door, as if thou wouldst shut out the World and Devils, and there hast fallen asleep, or (which is as bad) parlied with the Devil, and pampered thy Lusts: Hypocrisy, like the Frogs of *Egypt*, hath crept into thy most secret Retirements.

How

How few can pretend to Uniformity in their Obedience? How many will be ashamed, because they *respect not all* GOD's *Commandments*? Still they clip the Law; still some Reserves; they will let go Profaneness, so they may but reserve Covetousness; they will pray and hear, so they may extort from their Neighbour; or they will be strict to Rules of Justice and Equity among Men, but they will rob GOD of his Honour: Some of them are punctual to a Day, to a Farthing, (Blush, Reader, if thou art short of the Hypocrites Stature) but they will rob GOD of his Due, of his Due in the Closet, and in the Family too.

How frequently do we hear some desiring to know the least Measure of saving Grace; and why? because they would sit down therewith. There is not a surer Note of an unsound Heart, than to be contented with the least Degree of Grace, and not to press forward.

How generally do Men hate to be examined about their State? This is a sure Sign of a painted Christian: Paint will not endure the Fire; Hypocrites hate lancing and piercing Work. How many continue in a Course of Religion, and yet their Hearts are hardned more and more, and they know it, and yet will hardly consult with Ministers about their sad Condition; or if they do, yet practise nothing more than before?

O! WHAT a Controversy hath GOD with *England* for its great Hypocrisy? We have called ourselves *the holy City*, and have made Mention of the GOD of Israel, but *not in Truth, not in Righteousness*. Though you have passed for Saints in the Account of short-sighted Men, yet you are but Devils in *Christ's* Account: Of all Devils none are

so bad as the professing Devil. O! when will ye put on the new Man, which after GOD is created in Righteousness, and true Holiness? Believe it, if thou art a whited Wall, GOD will smite thee: If you deny GOD your Hearts, never expect his Ear: Quails you may have, but with a Vengeance, with Leanness in your Souls: That which GOD desireth and looketh for, is Truth in the inward Parts.



C H A P. XIX.

Their Sabbath Sins.

WHEN you remember the Evil of your Ways, of your ungodly Ways, you may not omit your Sabbath Sins. GOD hath appointed the Sabbath; He hath sanctified it for special and entire Communion with Himself. The Law of the Sabbath was given before the Fall: But since the Fall, this Rest is of more absolute Necessity, for that we cannot now apply our Minds entirely to Matters of so different a Nature, as heavenly and earthly Things are. The Sabbath is many Ways honourable: It was anciently set apart by GOD; it was written with GOD's own Finger on the Tables; GOD rained Manna on that Day; it is called an everlasting Covenant, by Way of Eminency, as if nothing of GOD's Covenant were kept, if this were not: Yea, GOD puts a Remember on this Day, and no other: Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day. If a Friend sendeth to you, that he will come and solace himself in your Company such a Day, and tells you the set Time when

when he will come, will he not take it ill if you neglect him then? If you are full of Employments, and other Guests, and have no Leisure to attend Communion with him? Thus saith God, "Remember such a Time, I will set it apart on Purpose to feast you; you are on other Days clogg'd and cumbred with earthly Affairs, so that I can have but broken Communion with you; but pray remember to lay aside all other Business, that I and you may freely converse together." But instead of this,

How little Preparation do we make for the observing this Day unto the LORD, though *Remember* be a Watch-word of solemn Preparation for it? *Remember it*, think of it before it come, that thou mayst be ready to sanctify it, without any Distraction by worldly Business. Which of us dispatcheth his worldly Business seasonably on the six Days? Nay, is it not a wicked Custom, to engross more Business into our Hands and Hearts the Day before than on any other Day of the Week? Do not greedy ones sit up later on *Saturday* Night, than any Night? Hereby their Hearts are cumbred with the World, and their Strength and Spirits wasted and spent, so that they cannot with a free Spirit wait upon God. Such is the Reverence that is due to the solemn and publick Duties of Devotion, that they require, not only a Surcease from other Works and Thoughts for the Time of the Performance, but also a decent Preparation before-hand; that we *look to our Feet*, that so our Thoughts and Affections (which are naturally bent upon the World, and not easily withdrawn from it) may be raised to a Disposition becoming the Day. God alone knows, how oft the Devil and our own Hearts have entangled us with Occasions on the *Saturday*, whereby our Minds have been distracted on the Sabbath;

yea, have we not at Times even secretly wished, that the Sabbath were over, or might be adjourned, that we might pursue some worldly Design, which is obstructed by its Interposal? The Sabbath is the Saints Market-day, or Fair-day: You know what Preparations are made by Worldlings for their Days of Gain; would to GOD we had learned Wisdom from carnal Men, so to prepare for the Advantages to our Souls we may reap upon GOD's Day.

How have we curtailed the Sabbath? Have not we risen later on the LORD's Day, than on any other? And gone sooner to Bed on that Day, than on any other? *When will the Sabbath be gone?* Do not we make it the shortest Day of the Week? O! if GOD had reserved all the Days to Himself save one, how diligent would you have been, to take all the Day to your worldly Business? This is a clear Evidence, that your Minds are more on your Profits and Pleasures, than on the Service of *Christ*.

How lowring are our Countenances, and how lumpish and heavy are our Hearts, in the Beginning of a Sabbath, much more than upon any other Day? Doth not this prove the Day to be no Way pleasing to us? And how chearful are some of us when the Sabbath is ended? The Heart is not so well pleased all the Day, as then; yea, do not some cheat and delude themselves hereby, as if they had Joy in the LORD, and had received Comfort from the Word, and other Ordinances; whereas they are glad that the Yoke of Ordinances, the Burden of the Word of the LORD, and the Burden of the Day of the LORD is taking off their Shoulders?

How quieted are some when they have attended the publick Service? Do they betwixt and after those solemn Duties refrain their Lips from worldly Talk,

Talk, from Impertinences, from such Discourse as bears no Proportion with the Holiness of the Day?

How many neglect to *do all their Works on the six Days*, though the LORD so expressly chargeth them so to do, that they may have a Pretence of Necessity to do much servile Work on the Sabbath? How common is it to dress Meat on the Sabbath, more than on any other Day, when there is not the least Pretence of Weakness? Hereby not only Servants, but the whole House are too much in Labour and Distraction, and hindered, if not from the solemn Assemblies, yet from Family and Closet Worship.

How do many gossip, compliment, and feast away (Abroad) the Day of the LORD? Or else eat to Excess at Home, and thereby make themselves fitter for a Bed, than to wait on the Sanctuary, to hear *Christ's* Voice, to meditate on his Love, and to feed in his pleasant Pastures?

How careful are we to keep ourselves and ours from pilfering from our Neighbour? but not from stealing from GOD his Time; yea, are not some Governors so ungodly and unmerciful, that they will allow their People no Time but the Sabbath to recreate themselves from their Labours? If they need Recreation, you have more Time than GOD hath reserved; sure you should not steal from GOD to pleasure them.

IN the Discharge of the Works of Mercy to Man and Beast, do not we respect more our own Commodity, than the Will of GOD, than the Dispensation of GOD, and the Creatures Necessities? Are these Works of Mercy attended with such spiritual
L 3 Meditations,

Meditations, as they would afford us if our Hearts were holy?

How few bless GOD for giving them one Day, wherein they may lighten their Hearts of all worldly Cares, and throw off all Grievs and secular Cumbers, and may seek Relief and Comfort in their GOD?

PERHAPS the Master observes a Day unto the LORD; but how careless is he that his Sons and Daughters, and all within his Gate, honour the Day of the LORD? Do not many Governors of Families let them sleep away the Sabbath, that they may be fitter for their Drudgeries the following Week? O! when will Governors be as diligent that their Servants and Household serve the LORD, as that they serve themselves? You have been careful that your Work were done on the Week, but careless whether GOD's Work were done by them on the Sabbath; careless whether your Servants profited by the Sabbath or no? When will GOD's Glory and the Good of your Peoples Souls be nearer to you than your worldly Advantages? You ask your Servants what Work they have done for you every Day, and call them to frequent Accounts for your Gain's Sake: And what! never reckon with them about their spiritual Work? O! how little *is the Love of GOD in your Hearts?*

How justly may GOD be angry with us, 'till He hath consumed us, for our defiling the Day of the LORD? It was GOD's Law, that *every one that defileth it should surely be put to Death.* When the People were weary of the Sabbath, when they said, *When will the new Moon be gone, that we may sell Corn, and the Sabbath, that we may set forth Wheat?* The LORD swore by the Excellency of Jacob, Surely *I will*

I will not forget any of their Works. Shall not the Land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? I will turn your Feasts into Mourning, and all your Songs into Lamentation. Behold, the Days come, saith the LORD GOD, that I will send a Famine in the Land, not a Famine of Bread, nor a Thirst for Water, but of hearing the Words of the LORD. And they shall wander from Sea to Sea, and from the North even to the East, they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the LORD, and shall not find it.



CHAP. XX.

Their Miscarriages about Self-Examination.

THE more the LORD of Heaven chargeth us with a Duty, the more inexcusable are our Neglects of it: There are few Things more commanded, than to try our Hearts and Lives: We are apt to be Strangers to ourselves, to cheat ourselves with vain Hopes, to rest in Notions; therefore *examine yourselves*, take an experimental Knowledge of yourselves: We are apt to prove others, and censure them; therefore *prove yourselves*, begin at Home, try your State, try your Actions, bring your Metal to the Touchstone, see whether it be sound or counterfeit; try your Faith, whether it be temporary or saving; prove your Repentance, whether it be thorough or superficial; examine your Love, whether it be sincere or hypocritical; and your Obedience, whether it be universal or partial.

Know

Know therefore, and consider in thy Heart, make a Return or Answer to thine Heart : Commune with thine own Heart, hold Intelligence with it : Let a Man examine himself : Let us search and try our Ways. But yet notwithstanding these Injunctions,

1. *How many are there, that never set about this Duty ? They will Pray and read, but will not be persuaded to look inward : They are as great Strangers to their own, as to others Hearts. They are at no Pains, to try in what State they are : They will not try, whether they are new-born, or not ; whether sanctified, or not ; whether a saving Change hath past upon them, or not : They never examine what Justification, and justifying and saving Faith be, and whether they are justified, and shall be saved ; like Gallio, Little caring for these Things : They reexamine which Way they may be greater in the World ; but not how to prepare for Eternity. You ask one another, what News from Navies, from Armies, from Court, from Country ; but when did you spend one Hour to ask our Hearts this serious Question, *O my Soul ! what will become of thee, when thou leavest this earthly Tabernacle ?* We travel any where, but where we should : We are better read in any Book, than in the sealed Book of our own Hearts : We are not at all for a personal Treaty with our own Consciences : We are too much prying into other Mens Hearts, but our Eyes turn not inward : We know not how it is with our Souls, and what will become of them ; and we have no Mind to know such Matters.*

As we commune not with our Hearts about our States, so we do not commune with them about our Actions, neither before, nor after the doing them ; Before we act, we do not advise with our Consciences, whether, what we be about to do,

be lawful or unlawful; and if lawful, whether expedient or inexpedient: After we have acted, whether our Actions be good or evil. How many are content so the Matter be good, but examine not themselves about the Manner, Principles, Ends, and Motives? Alas! how many wholly neglect this necessary Duty? If all were like these, God might take up his old Complaint, *No Man* cried out, *What have I done?* Or, O my Heart! *What hath GOD done for thee?*

2. *If we do examine our Hearts, yet not by the Word of the LORD.* GOD would have us to try and prove ourselves; then there must be some measuring Line, some Standard, some Rule, to try ourselves by; but herein we are hugely defective. We try ourselves by some sudden Pangs, or by the good Opinion of others concerning us, or by the Lives of others, (we being in an Hospital, where every one almost is lame and defective) or by some other easy Rule, that we ourselves frame unto ourselves, and so miserably cheat ourselves. O! how loth are we, that the Light of GOD's Word should be let down into the dark Cells of our Hearts. How loth to try States or Actions by the Scripture, though thereby they must be tried at the last Day. He is a good Text-man, that compares Scripture with Scripture; and he is a good Christian, that compares the Scripture and his own Heart together, that credits his own Heart only, when it hath the Consent of the Prophets and Apostles.

3. *How superficial are many in examining themselves by the Word?* How few examine their State, or their Actions fully? Though our Hearts be very great Impostors, *deceitful above all Things*, great Supplanters, full of Guile; though there be Thousands and Thousands of Lusts that be hid in our
Hearts,

Hearts, and Deceits like the Sands on the Sea-shores yet how carelessly do we set upon this work? We take no Pains in it.

4. *How seldom are we in this Work?* Some defer it 'till a Sacrament, and then perhaps *the House is searched for the Leaven*; whereas we should keep a petty Sessions in our Hearts every day, and do what we can to know the Bottom of the Projects, Devices, and Workings of our Hearts. When going to Prayer, we should examine ourselves, whether we have clean Hands, and pure Hearts, whether we are double-minded; if so, there is no drawing nigh to GOD: And when we come off from the Duty, we should confer with our Hearts, what Enlargements, Quicknings, Meltings, Humblings we had in the Duty; what Promises, what Threats were applied by the Spirit; whether we saw the Face of our Beloved, or not? When going to a Sermon, we should examine in what Posture we are to meet with GOD, what Oil we want, that we may be supplied? When going to our Beds, we should examine our Hearts, how the Day hath been spent, what Sins were committed, what Duties done, and how discharged; what Temptations were resisted, what Mercies received, and what Growth and Increase of Grace we have obtained? When going to Visit, this Duty should be taken up before and after: Before, thus, Wherein may I honour the LORD my GOD in such Company? What are their Wants, that I may endeavour to supply them? What are their Temptations and Discouragements, that I may labour to support them? What are their Graces, that I may profit by them? After, thus, O my Heart! What good didst thou do or receive in that Company? Wast thou *Eyes to the Blind, Feet to the Lame*? Didst thou labour to bring thy Friends nearer to *Jesus Christ*? Or hast thou more estrang-

ed and prejudiced them, from and against the Way of Truth? O my Heart! Didst thou take Heed to thy Ways that thou didst not sin with thy Tongue? Didst thou keep thy Mouth as with a Bridle? When going into the Shop, or Field; yet with *Isaac* thou art to meditate there, and confer with God and thy Heart; thus, O my Heart! for whom dost thou labour, for thyself, or for God? Whose Servant wilt thou be To-day, the World's or *Christ's*? How many Snares are there in the World, and how great is thy Danger, if God prevent not by special Grace? O my Soul! What Need hast thou of Almighty Power to keep thee, that thou mayst retain thy Sweetness in Salt Waters?

BUT alas! How seldom do we reflect on our Words, or Silence; on our Speaking or Hearing; on our Behaviour Abroad, or at Home! When do we consider, what our Affections were most set upon, in such a Place, in such an Hour; and what our Demeanor toward God, and toward our Neighbour, was? We do not believe *Bernard*, who tells us, "If we would examine ourselves as oft as we need, we must do it always." And *Chrysostom's* Paraphrase and Counsel on *Psalms* IV. is of as little credit with us, "Let this Account be kept every Day; have a little Book in thy Conscience, and write therein thy daily Transgressions, and when thou layest thee down on thy Bed, bring forth thy Book, and take an Account of thy Sins."

5. Do not we grow weary of this Work, before it be brought to any considerable Issue? We flag before we come to the Upshot. Still some were learning, and never came to the Knowledge of the Truth: And so some pretend at least to be always trying; but they hold not fast: They try their Hearts, as some

some did Truths, 'till they be wholly sceptical, as ignorant whether converted, or no, as ever: They know not more this Year, than they did seven Years since; but hang betwixt Heaven and Hell, in a dubious State, for Want of Skill or Pains to decide this Matter. We are not resolute and peremptory enough to have an Account of our Souls, yea such an one, that we may have Boldness in the Presence of *Christ*. We should commune, 'till we know, whether we be natural or spiritual; and accordingly be humbled greatly, or greatly rejoice in *God* our Saviour. Reader, could I but prevail with thee, to set in good Earnest upon Heart-Examination, and Solemn Meditation, and Self-Trial, I should bless the *LORD* as long as I breathe for this Enterprize of mine. The Searcher of Hearts knoweth, that I took Pen in Hand on this Design, to labour with thee in order to inside Duties, that thou mightest not be contented with a Form of Godliness, and rest in the external Part of Religion, that more Work might be done within Doors, in Closets, and Hearts. O that you would reform! nor pass on to another Chapter, till you have engaged your slippery, inconstant Hearts, to attend on this necessary Duty! Take a few Considerations to impell you.

I. *THE very Heathen will rise up in Judgment to condemn you, if you neglect this Duty.* A Roman Philosopher every Night, before he slept, would examine himself thus, "What Sin hast thou opposed? wherein art thou bettered?" *Cato* also would daily at Evening call to Mind, what ever he had seen, read, or done that Day. "I use (saith *Seneca*) every Evening to plead my Cause with myself: When the Candle is gone, and all silent, I review all that I have said or done in the Day: I hide nothing from mine own Scrutiny: I pass by nothing."

nothing." *Pythagoras* gave also this severe Rule to his Scholars, that "they should no Night suffer Sleep to seize their Senses, 'till they had three Times recalled the Accidents and Passages of the Day; what Evil have I committed? What Good have I omitted?" Now except your Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (may not I say of the Heathen) how can you hope for Salvation? How hath thine Heart cheated thee with vain Confidences? How hast thou cried, *The Temple of the LORD: I have Abraham to my Father*; whilst moral Heathens have been better acquainted with their Hearts, than thou art?

2. *You yourselves will be Judges of yourselves.* You take the Glass, and what is amiss in the Hair, in the Face, in the Body, you rectify by it; and what no Observation to be made of the Faces of your Souls? O! take the Word of God; and make use of this Glass, which now is in thine Hand: Doth it discover no Spots, no Neglects, no Failings? O! view thyself, and humble thyself, reflect on thyself, and confer with thyself, 'till thou art ashamed, 'till thou abhorrest and loathest thyself before the LORD.

3. *You have a sure Sign of Hypocrisy on you, whilst this Duty is neglected*; for all the upright are careful to commune with their Hearts, to search their Hearts, to make diligent Search, lest any Lust should be covered, as *Rachel* covered her Idols. Nothing is more desired by a sincere Soul, than to be thoroughly searched, *examine me, O LORD*, as Artificers do whether their Gold be Weight or no; and prove me, as Artificers do their Silver in the fire; try my Reins and my Heart, the most inward Motions of my Soul: Search me more deeply and thoroughly than the World can do. Unsound Hearts have one

Dalilah, so that they cannot endure to be examined and found out; they are loth to search too far, lest they should see what they are unwilling to see, and so be put upon judging and condemning themselves for that which they love above an Eye, or an Hand.

4. *BUT observe the sad Consequences of the Neglect of this Duty?* By this Neglect your Hearts will become careless, for that they are not called to Account, as Servants and Factors are wont, when their Masters neglect to examine them. Hereby Sins will grow bolder with you, and the more easily beset you; for that you examine not wherein their Strength lies, and which Way they oftneft prevail over you. Hereby the Work of Repentance will be obstructed; for that innumerable Sins, which you are daily guilty of, will pass away unobserved, with those Circumstances attending them, which make them of the greater Magnitude. And how can you *walk before GOD with an humble Heart*, when you know not what your Hearts are? How can you *serve Him with an upright Heart*, whilst a Stranger to this Duty? Like the foolish Virgins, you will not know your undone Condition 'till it be too late; you lie deceived in Matters of the highest Concernment; you are cheated hitherto in Things of Eternity: You are vexed when deceived by a Friend, when supplanted by a Neighbour: O! how will it pierce your Souls, to be cheated by yourselves? Here is one that lies in thy Bosom, and thou and it go to cheat each other continually. *Let no Man deceive himself*: It seems we are apt to do so: But O! how great will your Confusion be, when this Deceit shall be manifested, when you shall see yourselves frustrated of all your Hopes, and the Glory your Heart promised you? How will you be confounded, when you shall

*shall say, we looked for Heaven, but behold Hell;
we looked for Salvation, but behold Destruction.*

5. *If you be loth to see how it is with you now, how will you be able to behold what shall be seen in the Day of Judgment? Though you will not now know your Hearts, yet GOD is coming with his Fan: The Books must be opened, and every Page of thy Heart will be unfolded, for GOD will bring to Light every hidden Work of Dishonesty: Thy inward Parts, which are very Wickedness, shall be made manifest: And then thou shalt be speechless, as if thou hadst a Muzzle put upon thy Mouth, as the Word signifieth. Well, seeing the Secrets of the Soul must be brought forth, is it not better, by judging ourselves, to prevent the Terror of the last Day? Judged we must and shall be; is it not then thy Wisdom to judge thyself here in thy Closet, that thou mayst be judged by GOD with a Judgment of Absolution, and not of Condemnation? Is it nothing to have all thy unrepented and unforgiven Sins published on the House Top, made known to all the World at the great Day? How will thine Heart endure then, when the LORD shall come to deal with thee? You will not see; but you shall see: You will not retire, the World lies in your Hearts, Business comes in, and takes up all your Time and Spirits: GOD is about to strip you, to ease you of your Callings, you shall come naked to the Bar of GOD, you shall have no Family Business to distract you; a fair Trial there shall be, but a sad one for thee: Your Sins shall find you out. You have had many Calls: Once more I call upon you, in the Name of Christ, to examine your Hearts by the Words of this Book, which you have, or shall read; and be sure of it, if you will not try yourselves by the Word, GOD will try you by your Works.*



C H A P. XXI.

Their Pride.

BEHOOLD, *This was the Iniquity of thy Sister Sodom:* And is not this devilish Sin become our national Sin?

1. *WITH what a bold and impudent Face have we come and appeared before GOD?* Who hath sensibly expressed himself in Abraham's Words, *Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which am but Dust and Ashes:* Instead of a reverential Fear of GOD, our Behaviour has been stout against GOD, and we have not trembled in his Presence, no not whilst we have been terribly threatned by GOD, yea when his dreadful Threatnings have been terribly executed upon us; even in such Times we have irreverently rushed into his Presence.

2. *How have our Wills risen up against the Will of GOD?* The humble Soul stoops to GOD's preceptive and providential Will; but we have wretchedly thwarted GOD in all his Counsels and Dispensations: The great Controversy betwixt GOD and Man, is, *Whose Will shall stand, GOD's or Man's?* O! how impudently have we contended with the LORD about this? We have even thought ourselves too great to be crossed. How many think it a Disgrace to be still and silent under the Hand of GOD, but they must be clamorous, and speaking against the very Heavens? They are ready to say, "This was not well done by GOD, He might have

have given or continued us this and the other Mercy: They dislike many of GOD's Dispensations of Providence: They cannot heartily say, that GOD holds the Reins best, and guides all his Affairs with the greatest Wisdom: They think if they were the Orderers of Matters in the World, Things would be better governed: Like Absalom, who wished he were in David's Stead, they wish they were in GOD's Stead. A proud Man would have others under him; yea, he would have the great and glorious GOD subject to his Will: Whence are all your Disputings and Quarrellings with GOD, save from the Pride of your Hearts? The humble Soul cries, *Not my Will, but thine be done: It is the LORD, let Him do what seemeth Him good:* But so overgrown are we with an Opinion of our own Wisdom and Worth, that we must limit the Holy One, and order Him to rule the World: GOD must stoop to our Prescriptions, or else we swell and break with Discontent: O! is not GOD wiser than Man? Shall the Clay say to the Potter, *why hast thou shaped me thus?* Rather let the Potsherd strive with the Potsherd, Worms with Worms, about the Pre-eminence of Wills, than we contend with GOD: O! when will your proud Hearts stoop to GOD? When shall his Will be the Rule? When will you be willing to be dealt with as GOD pleaseth?

3. How loth are we that GOD should have any Glory in the World, unless we share in it, or unless we be the immediate Instruments of exalting Him? We are willing GOD should have some Glory, so we may share with Him: We are willing GOD should be exalted, so it be by ourselves; else we are discontented: O! think with yourselves, how many good Motions, tending to the Edification of the Body of Christ, have miscarried on this Account, because others should not have the Honour of be-

ginning them? Whence can it be, save from the Pride of our Hearts, that we have so little rejoiced when GOD hath been advanced by others, and we had no Hand therein? We are afraid that others' Glory will eclipse ours.

4. *How unthankful are we?* A proud Man is always an unthankful Man, and an unthankful Man is always a proud Man: He thinks he deserves all that is conferred on him: The humble Man counts himself less than the least of all GOD's Mercies; but the proud Man reckoneth all he enjoyeth too little. Do we not think GOD is beholden to us for our Duties and Services, more than we are to Him for Life, Breath, and all our Possessions?

5. *Do we not think GOD hath punished us above our Deserts?* Do we not hence cry out more of our Pain, than we do of our Sins and Provocations? Were we humble, we should bless the LORD, that He hath *restrained his rough Wind in the Day of his East Wind*: We should wonder that it is so well with us, that we are not in a worse Condition: We should cry out, *It is of the LORD's Mercy that we are not consumed: Wherefore doth a living Man complain, a Man for the Punishment of his Sins?* How loth are we to confess our Iniquities have deserved all that we suffer, and a great deal more? How do we endeavour to hide our Sins from GOD, Man, and ourselves?

6. *How apt are we to boast of any Good we do?* Of our Valour in the Field, of our Discourses in such and such Company, how wisely we discharged such a Service, how well we behaved in such an Action? *Come see my Zeal for the LORD*. Look to your Hearts, you will find them unduly transported, as with the Thoughts of your Gifts and Graces,

so with what you do through the Gift of Grace. Our very Graces are often an Occasion of boasting: It is a rare Thing to see a Man rich in Gifts, and poor in Spirit: Even Knowledge puffeth up.

7. DOth not any Thing of ours swell us? Are not some puffed up with their fine Cloaths, Ribbons, Dressings, yea with their very Spots? Their Feathers, their Hair, the Excrements of Beasts and Men, make them fly high. Are not some puffed up with their Birth? Hence they boast, that they have the Blood of Kings or Nobles running in their Veins; or else that they are the Stock of Abraham, descended from Parents eminent for Piety. How many are swelled with their Estates? That they have Shops full, Houses full, and Bags full, puffeth them up. How are others puffed up with the Smiles of great Men? And yet how soon may the Sun be overcast? Then they are no more heeded than the Dial is when the Sun is in a Cloud. How doth the bodily Strength and Perfections of others swell them, though every Moment they are going down into the Dust? What is your Life? It is even a Vapour, that appeareth a little Time, and then vanisheth away. How are others swelled with their Church Privileges? The Temple of the LORD, the Temple of the LORD are we. Others with their Revelations and high Enjoyments? Paul was in Danger of being exalted above Measure, through the Abundance of the Revelations, therefore was given to him a Thorn in the Flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above Measure.

8. How little Suspicion have we of ourselves? Of our Baseness and Sinfulness, the Deceits and Treachery of our own Hearts? With how much Confidence do we trust ourselves in wicked Men's Company, and fear not to be leavened with them?

How

How little do we suspect that we shall fall from the Grace we have, or seem to have? *We are high minded, and therefore fear not:* We do not suspect that there are worse Abominations within than yet are discovered. How do we pretend to bless God that our Hearts are good? We fear not the worst of ourselves. If others be overcome with Unclean-ness or Passion, we are confident we shall never so dishonour God.

9. How glad are we if others take Notice of our Actions? And how are we pleased if they commend us for them, and yet we would not have them think so? We discommend our Prayers, for Deadness, Straitness, and ourselves for Want of Parts. How few are troubled at the Praises of their Friends, more than at Flashes of Lightning in their Faces?

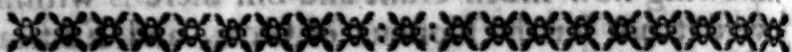
10. How magisterical have we been? What Dictators to others, as if all were bound to dance after us? We will not abate at all, but every poor *Mondain* must do Obeisance to our Opinion.

11. How few will confess their Faults to others? Perhaps they will reform, but hate to acknowledge their Trespases to others, whom they have trespassed against. How many have you injured by Tale-bearing and Backbiting? Must not God work a Miracle to persuade us to make Restitution, to go to the Parties wronged, and then confess the Wrong there, and then to go from House to House to vindicate and clear the Party, there where before we had stained and aspersed him? This makes me cry out, *LORD, Who shall be saved? LORD, Many are called, but few are chosen.*

12. WHAT a Stir do we make to vindicate ourselves when aspersed and calumniated? Whereas the
humble

A humble Soul would never stir to clear himself, as knowing how much Guilt and Sin there is within, were it not for the Honour of God, and Edification of the LORD's People, which may be hindered, if Prejudices be not removed.

No Wonder if for these Things God make us a Shame, and a Derision, a Proverb, and a By-word to all Nations round about us. Our Pride testifies to our Faces: We are guilty of what brought down Fire on Sodom: This is the Sin that God setteth Himself in Battle-Array against, so the Word for resisting in that Scripture, God resisteth the Proud, signifieth: It is that which makes God abhor us, and our Offerings. *Every one that is proud in Heart is an Abomination to the LORD.* Believe it, God's Eyes are upon the Haughty, that He may bring them down, and He watcheth his Opportunity to do it. *The LORD knoweth the Proud afar off.* When God meets with a Spectacle that He cannot endure to look upon, He turns from it, whilst it is afar off. Pride is the first of those seven Things, which are an Abomination to the LORD, And no Wonder that God so loatheth it, whilst it crosseth the great Design of God in the Gospel, which is to humble the Mountains, that no Flesh should glory in his Presence, but that he that glorieth, should glory only in the LORD.



CHAP. XXII.

Their Intemperance in Eating.

THOUGH Pride was the first Spark that blowed up the Glory of *Sodom*, yet there was also Fulness of Bread, that made the Flame greater. Their Pride was evidenced in their Fulness of Bread, as the Cause in the Effect. The Word *σωφρον*, which signifieth to be temperate, is (as one well observes) applied frequently to the Mind, in Opposition to Pride; because Sobriety proceeds from an humble Sense that nothing is ours, but all that we have is God's; and all Intemperance is commonly the Issue of a proud Spirit, which makes Men look on themselves as Owners, and all Creatures as their proper Goods, which are perfectly at their Disposal. Hence the *Crown of Pride*, and the *Drunkards of Ephraim*, are both Names for the same Persons. And is not our Pride evidenced in our Fulness of Bread? *Sodom's* Intemperance in Eating (not to insist on Intemperance in Drinking) was very great, but I fear *England's* hath exceeded *Sodom's*. I will not say, *All your Labour is for the Mouth*, (as *Solomon* complains) *and yet the Appetite is not filled*; but this I say, that some live to eat, some sacrifice all to the Belly, to some the Belly is a God. Few can displease their Appetite: Like prophane *Esau*, they part from their Heritage, from the Blessing of the First-born, for a Mess of Pottage, for a little Pleasure to the Taste. How will we deny ourselves in respect of Life, when we cannot deny ourselves in respect of a little Meat? As Heaven and God are

low

low, very low with them that cannot deny themselves in a little *Indian Smoke*, in a Pipe, in a Cup of Liquor, but be immoderate in these, though thereby they hazard the Displeasure of God; so are they very low with us, if we cannot deny ourselves in our Morsels: All our Ruin came in at this Door, that *Adam* ventured the Displeasure of God, to eat a little pleasant Fruit. A Man would think, that the Wounds we received by the Mouth, should make us check our Appetite all our Days.

1. How have we been guilty of eating too much? A little would content Nature. How have our Hearts been over-charged with Surfeiting? How have we forgot *Christ's* Charge against this Sin, even to his own Disciples? Have we not hereby been disabled to perform the Service we owe to God? As some have been strong to drink, so others to eat; both have been unfitted to wait upon God thereby. The End of our Eating should have been to fit us, not to indispose us for the Service of God. We should measure our Cheer by that which Nature requireth, and not by that which Appetite desireth. We divest ourselves of Man, of Reason, that should guide us, when we are led by a sensual Appetite. And yet alas! when we have eaten enough, and perhaps more than enough, a new Dish at the second Course makes us fall on again. Serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, is the Highway to Damnation. This Way Sin entered into the World, and in this Way, O! how many are posting to Hell! If you would adopt yourselves Children of Wrath, then fulfill the Desires of the Flesh. When *Tertullian* gives an Account of the Christians Feasts, "In our feeding (saith he) we remember that we are to pray at Night: Prayer is the first and last Dish of the Feast: And when we depart, our Behaviour is so religious and modest, that one would have thought, we had
"rather

“rather been at a Sermon than a Supper.” Bluff, O Reader! to consider how far short we fall of these Christians: Believe it, Intemperance and Luxury are national Sins; the Sins of England: It was spoken of our Nation, “That we build as if we should live for ever, and eat as if we should die presently:” O! when shall we imitate that great Apostle? *All Things (saith he) are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the Power of any.* It is a base Thing for a Man to be under the Power of Drinks, Apparel, or Meats; to be a Vassal to those Things over which the LORD hath given him Dominion. “He that loveth any Thing too much, (saith Aquinas) is in a Sense Servant thereunto.” And what saith the Apostle? *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are, to whom ye obey?* How many serve not the LORD *Jesus Christ*, but their own Bellies? How many are like the Men of the old World, *Given to eating*, so the Word in the Original properly signifieth?

2. How have our Tables been unsuitable to the Times we live in? Whether Zion wear the Garments of Joy, or of Heaviness, all is one, the Belly must be served, our Dishes must not abate: Thou farest deliciously every Day; all Times are alike to thee: This is a great Sin, and I cannot but charge many Professors of Religion with it. Respect is not had to the Tokens of God's Wrath. *We eat without Fear*; without Fear of the Wrath of God, that is ready to break forth upon us. *In this Day doth the LORD of Hosts call to Weeping, and to Mourning, and to Baldness, and to girding with Sackcloth: And behold, Joy and Gladness, slaying Oxen, and killing Sheep, (Actions lawful enough at another Time) eating Flesh, and drinking Wine. And it was revealed in my Lamentation by the LORD of Hosts,*

Surely

Surely this Iniquity shall not be purged from you 'till ye die.

3. How little Respect have we had to the Necessities of our Brethren? If there were any true Love to GOD, to Religion, or to the Church of GOD, we should abate of our worldly Comforts, we should cut ourselves short of what we were wont to lay out, not only in Cloaths, but in House-keeping, Meats and Drinks; we should not give such Liberty to the satisfying of the Flesh, that we might be in the greater Capacity to promote pious and charitable Designs. But alas! Iniquity abounds, and the Love of many waxeth cold.

4. Do not we eat without an holy Fear of GOD? The Elders of Israel did eat their Bread before the LORD. But so have not we, so do not we eat as in the Presence of GOD. Have not some been so eager upon pleasing the Flesh, and gratifying their sensual Appetites, that they have (secretly at least) been troubled at a long Grace (as it is called) before Meat? Have not some fallen to their Meat without invoking GOD at all? How unlike are such to Christ, whose usual Practice it was, to lift up his Eyes to Heaven, and crave a Blessing upon the Creatures, before He partook of them? How distracted have been the Thoughts of others that have prayed, in that short Time? How were their Thoughts on the Meats and Drinks? How hastily do Men after a Blessing is craved run to the Dish, without any the least Pause or Consideration whether GOD heard them or no, when they called upon Him? How commonly do we erase our Petitions, I mean, contradict all our Prayers? We pray our Discourses may be heavenly, and they are altogether earthly. Few can say as blef-

sed *Dad* was wont at the Close of the Meal,
 “ Blessed be God, not one Word of earthly
 “ Things since we sat down?” We pray we
 may eat for God, and we eat for ourselves. We
 have not so good a Plea to make as some, *we have*
eat and drank in thy Presence. This is not written
 over our Tables, *Thou God seest.* We can sel-
 dom call our Table *Penuel*, because we have seen
 God in this Place. How little do we consider,
 that they are God’s Creatures? *She did not know*
that I gave her-Corn. And that as the Meat is
 God’s, so it is He who gives us Appetites, and
 Strength and Ability to put every Crumb into our
 Mouths; *for in Him we live and move.* How little
 do we believe that we must account for every Bit
 and Drop? How little do we consider that God
 stoops the Creatures to us, that we may stoop to
 Him, and lay down our Lives as willingly for
 God’s Honour, as God caused the Creature to
 bleed and die for our Use? How little do we think
 of the heavenly Banquet, that our Father is pre-
 paring for us, where the Cloth shall never be ta-
 ken away, where we shall hunger and thirst no
 more, but be fully satisfy’d, and that for ever and
 ever? Examine your Spirits at your Tables, whe-
 ther the Fear of God be before your Eyes, whe-
 ther you stand in Awe of Him? It may be found
 that you never more forget God, then when God
 is mostly remembering you: When his Goods are
 most in your Hands and Mouths, your Mouths are
 so full, that they cannot shew forth his Praise;
 your Eyes are so held to your Belly-gods, that
 you forget JEHOVAH. Are there not some that will
 crave a Blessing before they eat, that yet fail to
 return Thanks afterwards; though *Joel* saith in
 his Prophecy to God’s People, *Ye shall eat and be*
satisfied, and praise the Name of the LORD your
God?

5. HAVE not we fed without a Christian Fear of scandalizing others, upon our eating profusely? What saith the Drunkard, Why may not I toss the Cann (in plain English be drunk) as well as such and such gormandise! Gluttons harden and justify Drunkards. St. Jude will tell you, that sensual Persons are the Spots of a Christian Society. O! my Brethren, *It is good neither to eat Flesh, nor to drink Wine, or any Thing else whereby thy Brother stumbleth, or is offended, or made weak.*

6. Do not we eat without a prudent Fear of the Snares that are in our Dishes? In Eating there ought to be much Caution. Job was afraid of the Entertainments of his Children. He was a wise Man, and knew that there were more Guests than were invited. I wish we knew it too. We think, if the Sons of God come together, the Devil will not come with them, tho' the Scripture assures us he will. It would be some Check when we sit at the Table, to consider, that the first immoderate Sop is handed over by the Devil, and in he goes with it into our Souls.

7. How have we had low, base, earthly, and sensual Ends in our Eating? Not to refresh our Bodies, but our Palates; not to glorify God, but to pamper the Flesh? Yea have not some Men fed on such and such Dishes on Purpose to provoke their Lust? Sure our Enemy is strong enough, we had need beat down the Body and keep it under, and not put Weapons in our Enemies Hands. What saith the Wise Man? *When thou sittest to eat with a Ruler (such keep plentiful Tables) consider diligently what is before thee, and put a Knife to thy Throat, if thou be a Man given to Appetite, i. e. bridle thine Appetite by Diligence, yea Force, be as circumspect as if thou wert under the Razor:*

Or, Consider diligently what is before thee, else thou puttest a Knife to thy Throat, i. e. thou endangerest thy Life, yea thy Soul, shouldst thou give Way to thy Appetite. What saith the Apostle, *Whether you eat or drink, let all be done to the Glory of God.* Why doth the Apostle name those Actions of Eating and Drinking, but because we commonly eat and drink to please the Appetite, not to fit for God's Service? When we have taken as much as serves this End, yet we must have one Bit more, or one Dish more, and so God and the Devil must part Stakes.

To shut up this : I believe many Men dig their Graves with their Teeth, and their Hells with their Tongues, their liquorish Tongues. Among the Millions that are now in the Grave or Hell, their inordinate Appetite hastened most thither. I say not but we may please our Palate, at some Times especially ; a great Liberty is indulged to the Sick ; but if we have not an higher Design than to please the Appetite, our Belly is our God. Little do many think that they are setting up another God at their Tables. The *Babylonians* had *Bel* for their God, a God of Brass ; but these Men have a God of Flesh.

REPENT, O *England!* repent of thy Abuse of the good Creatures of God, and thereby of thy sacrilegious robbing God of his Worship and Time. How often have ye so crammed yourselves that you have been unfit for any Acts of Worship? Your Heads have been heavy, and Spirits dull, and so God hath had the Carcass, but *Excesses have taken away the Heart.* I wish two Things for you, 1. That you would be as ingenuous as *Austin* was, who confessed he was no Drunkard, but yet sometimes immoderate in Eat-

Eating. And, 2. That you would be restless till God hath taught you, what He did him: "LORD (saith he) Thou hast now taught me to use my Meat, as my Medicine, to repair, not to oppress Nature.

C H A P. XXIII.

Their Idleness.

A THIRD Sin of Sodom was Idleness. This Sin is the Companion of the former: *When the Belly is full, the Bones would be at Rest*, and when Men have eat and drank to Excess, then they rise up to play.

1. How are we guilty of Idleness in our particular Callings? Few have this for their Motto, "Let us be Working." How many at the great Day will God upbraid with, *O wicked and slothful Servant!* Every Man hath a Talent of Time and Strength, but it is hid, it is not employed, at least as it ought. GOD made not Man to play, but to sweat out his Living. It was GOD's Ordinance in Paradise, and since that we are enjoined to labour with our Hands, and not to eat the Bread of Idleness. How many, because they have not done Good among their People, shall die in their Iniquity? Our Land is full of Drones; and no Wonder; for we train up our Children in Idleness, and let them waste the first of their Days in foolish Pleasures and Recreations. Foreigners breed their Children (to our Shame be it spoken) to work those Toys with their Hands, which our Children

must play away their Time with : Hence having inured themselves to Idleness, they hate Labour for the future. *Christ saw some standing idle* ; here He might see many : He could not endure it, *Why stand ye here all the Day idle ?* O ! how many are idle all the Days of their Lives ? How many Gentlemen and their Sons are there without a Calling ? They live as if God had sent them into the World to make their Hands as Perches for Birds to sit upon ; they are of no Use to the Publick. In Cities, how idle are the Dames ? They live as if God had given them reasonable Souls, and the Light of the Sun only to dress themselves, to view a Glass, and adorn their Carcasses. *There are some among you that work not at all, and yet Busy-Bodies.* Busy to invent Ways to pass away Time, tho' Time be still running, and they are hastening into Eternity. Doing nothing (saith the Apostle) and yet working every where, save where they should ; busy to go from House to House to compliment Friends, to devour others Time ; busy to carry Tales and News, but hating the Work of their Calling, wherein God hath set them.

THE whole Life of many is to eat, and drink, and sleep, and sport, and sit, and talk, and laugh themselves fat, but there is Leanness in their Souls. A Kind of vagrant People they are, that having little to do, the Devil is loth they should be idle, and therefore he hires them to devour Time, to carry News and Tales to mispend others Time : *They learn to be idle* ; they study which Way they may mispend Time, wandring from House to House, and yet they are not only idle, but Busy-Bodies : These are at Leisure to hear the Devil, and to observe his Orders. He that will not serve God at Home, the Devil, rather than he shall stand

stand out, will send him of his Errands, and get him to put his Sickle into another Man's Corn. "Go (saith Satan) into that House, and rail against such a good Man; carry his Miscariage from one to another, 'till his Name stinks in their Nostrils: Go to such a Man's Door, he is employed in reading the Scriptures, and good Books, or catechising his Family, go and divert him, eat up his Time, that he may have no Leisure for such Works." He goes, he is a Busy-Body, and a Tatler too. He must go whom the Devil drives, hence Occasion is given to the Adversary to speak reproachfully.

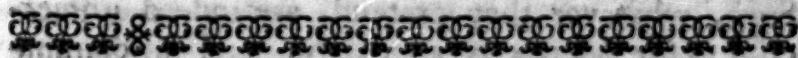
LET it be considered and lamented, *how much precious Time is devoured in the Bed*: Five Hours Sleep will suffice for some Constitutions: The utmost that Physicians allow, is seven Hours; but some bury themselves in their Beds almost half their Time. How little do many consider, that in the Day of Judgment, they must give Account, as for every idle Word, so for their Idleness in their Bed-chambers? Sluggard, view the Sun, He is running a Race, whilst thou art tumbling on thy Bed: View the Wind and the Air, they are in Motion: View the Waters, they stink and corrupt, unless running; nay, view the dull Earth, it is not so dull as thou art, it brings forth for the Use of Man. *Go to the Ant thou Sluggard*, yea any where, *consider the Ways of all, save thyself, and be wise*. What! a Professor of Religion, and yet guilty of an unnatural Sin? Nature puts all Creatures into Motion, and to provide for themselves: *Thou art worse than an Infidel*, yea worse than a Beast: The poor Infant cannot suck without Labour, and yet thou wouldst live without Labour. God hath not forbid Meat to be given to any other Sinners, only these are not to be fed, let them starve and die, if they will not labour.

Idleness

Idleness bath brought much Evil upon you, and bred many in you, it begets many Diseases in the Body, but many more in the Soul: It exempts a Man from the Protection of Angels, and it exposeth to God's Wrath; it brought Ruin upon Sodom, and the Cities round about; and they are set forth for an Example, suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire.

2. *How are we guilty of Abundance of Idleness in our general Callings?* And above all Idleness, Spiritual Sloth is most dangerous. I find some, with unwearied Diligence, labouring to enlarge their Possessions, and to raise their Posterity; they rise early, and sit up late, and eat the Bread of Carefulness, but all is for the Body; they do little or nothing for their precious Souls; *Christ and Heaven stand by, and few regard them: Few work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* Some will not be at so much Pains for their Souls, as to perform the common outward Duties of Religion. They will go to the Market, or to be merry with Friends many a Mile; but if a Sermon be but a few Paces from their Thresholds, they count it intollerable to wet their Feet, to expose themselves to the Air: But if Men are for some easy Parts of Religion, yet how few are for the difficult Parts thereof? They cannot endure to watch their Hearts, to sanctify the LORD'S-Day so strictly, as not to think their own Thoughts, nor speak their own Words, nor do their own Deeds. How many have so long given Way to Laziness, have lain so long upon the Bed of Sloth, that when we press them to any painful and laborious Duties, they say, *We have put off our Coat, and loath we are to put it on:* Hence Self-examination, Meditation, Watchfulness against the first Rising of Sin, Mortification of Heart-Sins, are totally laid by: And the longer we neglect them, the more ado there is to persuade

suade us to take them up. All we have to uphold ourselves with, is this, that the Spirit is willing; when GOD knows the contrary. We are willing to be rich, and therefore take Pains: So we would in Spiritual Things too, if we were desirous of them. If we were willing to enjoy *Christ* in our Closets, would we be asleep there upon our Knees? If we were willing to know the Way to Glory, would we not take so much Pains, as to go to the *Shepherd's Tents*, and ask for the good old Way? It will cut you to the Heart, when you come to Hell-gate, that you missed of Heaven, for not enquiring the Way thither; and that you took more Pains to be rich, and to damn your Souls, than to save them. Had that Time been spent in Prayer, holy Conference, and in Self-Examination, which was wasted in the Bed, Shop, or Fields, you might have had an eternal Rest; whereas Hell will be, as intollerable to all, so especially to them, who have *stood idle all the Day long*.



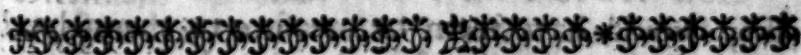
CHAP. XXIV.

Their Unmercifulness

THE fourth Sin of Sodom was this, *Neither did she strengthen the Hands of the Poor and Needy*: That is, they were unmerciful and inhuman. And are not some Professors of Religion even in England, very hard-hearted and cruel? If there be among you a poor Man, of one of thy Brethren, within any of thy Gates, in thy Land, which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy Heart, nor shut thine Hand

*Hand from thy poor Brother; but thou shalt open
 thine Hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend
 him sufficient for his Need, in that which he want-
 eth. The Poor we have always with us! But,
 When we make a Feast, do we call the Poor?
 Who invites the Guests that Christ hath bid to
 our Tables? Hear ye the Word of the LORD:
 He shall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath
 shewed no Mercy. He shall have all Judgment, pure
 Judgment, without any Mixtures of Mercy, un-
 mixed Wrath shall be his Portion: Christ is
 so resolved to punish the Unmerciful, that He
 will overlook any Sinner, rather than him;
 yea, for the greater Honour of the Justice of
 GOD. The LORD seems to begin and end the
 great Assizes with the Arraignment and Senten-
 cing of the unmerciful Man. How few are com-
 passionate? The proper, vital Act of Mercy, is
 Compassion. How few resent the Miseries of
 others, as if they were their own? How few
 set to do Good, to those who are miserable?
 Such, whatever they pretend, are indeed unmer-
 ciful; for Mercy is an active, and a commu-
 nicative Thing. How few are merciful to o-
 thers Souls? How few pity, and set themselves
 to help sinning Souls? How few are merciful
 to the Bodies of others? How many are there,
 that will not spare their Superfluities, to cloath
 Christ's naked Shoulders, or to fill his hungry
 Belly? Men lay out more to adorn a Cup-
 board, or the Walls of their Houses, than ever
 they gave to Christ and his Servants, all their
 Days: Christ tells you, what Kindness you shew
 to his Brethren, He counts as done unto Him-
 self: And believe it, all the Scorns, and Neglects
 you have cast on, either, his Ambassadors, or
 poor Saints, He will remember, another Day.
 Go to thy Closet, and carry this with thee,*
who so

whoſo ſtoppeth his Ear at the Cry of the Poor, he alſo ſhall cry himſelf, but ſhall not be heard. If you give, to whom is it? Is it not only to the Poor of your own Party? But hath not the LORD charged you, to give to every Man that asketh? Hath He excepted any, but Idlers? Are not you to do Good to all, though eſpecially to the Houſhold of Faith? And among them, ſhould not your greateſt Charity have been to them, who are become poor, by GOD's Providence, or for Conſcience Sake? But alas! how few can appeal to the Heart-ſearching GOD concerning their Mercifulneſs? How few (if Deſtruction from GOD be any Terror to them) dare imprecate upon themſelves, what Job did in Caſe of Unmercifulneſs? How few dare ſay to GOD, If I have with-held the Poor from their Deſire, or have cauſed the Eyes of the Widow to fail, or have eaten my Morſel myſelf alone, and the Fatherleſs hath not eaten thereof: If I have ſeen any periſh for Want of Cloathing, or any Poor without Covering, then let mine Arm fall from my Shoulder Blade, and mine Arm be broken from the Bone.



C H A P. XXV.

*Their Unrighteouſneſs, or Unfaithfulneſs
in Trading.*

INSTEAD of Mercifulneſs, behold Oppreſſion, Violence, Deceit, Fraud. This is a Lamentation, and ſhould be for a Lamentation. Inſtead of giving to others that which is our own,
we

we deny them that which is their own: Instead of letting go our own Right, and those Dues, which in Justice others are bound to pay us; yea, instead of giving more of our own, to help them in their Necessities (which Mercy calls for) even not to require, what others owe us, when not only Providence hath disenabled them to pay us, but also to give them more to support their feeble State withall, behold Injustice. What defrauding is there one of another? How do Men, not only take all Advantages of their Brethren, to get what is due to them, as to seize on a Mortgage, when the Mortgage-money cannot be paid, or to sue a Bond, or turn a Man out of his Lease, when the Day of Payment is missed, but also take Advantage from the Necessities of the Poor to over-reach them, to get from them, either their Houses or Goods, to be sure what is not their own? Have not we grinded the Faces of the Poor? God will reckon for this speedily. Look over the Prophets, and see whether Unmercifulness and Unrighteousness ever went unpunished.

How few are there who mete to others, as they would have them to measure to themselves? The Rule of *Christ*, whereby Peace among Men would be preserved, is not heeded by us. We do not deal with others, as we would be dealt with, though *Christ* says unto us, *All Things whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them: For this is the Law and the Prophets*

How common, but cursed a Principle is it, that every Man may get for his Wares, as much as he can? Hence Men take Advantage of others Necessities, or of their Want of Skill: Hence bad
Wares

Wares are put into Men's Hands for good Wares, or else unreasonable Demands are made to the Prejudice of the Buyer: Would we be so dealt with?

How commonly do Men demand a far greater Sum for their Wares, than they will accept? Hereby they shew an oppressing Mind, if their Customers would but comply with them. The Quakers will rise up in Judgment, to condemn this Generation. O! how do Men mind Profit more than their own Honour and Reputation yea (which is more inexcusable) than the Reputation of *Christ* and his Gospel? Is it not Matter of Lamentation, that some profess, they had rather deal with a *Turk*, or with a *Jew*, than with such and such a *Christian*? By Reason of you the Name of GOD is blasphemed among the Gentiles. Wherein doth your Light shine before Men? They cannot dive into your Hearts, they can only discern your Actions: They know not what your Love to GOD is, though you pretend much to Knowledge; yet Knowledge void of Charity and Honesty, is to them an Abomination.

How few trade in Fear, lest by getting an Estate, they lose GOD, and a good Conscience? When one told *Latimer*, that he was cozened in paying for a Knife double to what it was worth, "No (said he) he hath not cozened me, but his own Conscience." No Wonder that Tradesmen complain of Deadness in their Families and Closets, and impute it to their Callings, and thereby charge GOD implicitly: Alas! it is not their Calling hath straitned and deadned their Hearts toward GOD; but their Oppression and Deceit in their Business, hath provoked GOD to leave them.

them. Hath not GOD expressly charged you, *Let no Man go beyond or over-reach another in any Matter, because that the LORD is the Avenger of all such?* The Vengeance of GOD is upon thee, in the Straitness of thy Spirit in Duties, and without Repentance it will follow thee 'till it hath laid thee in the Pit of Hell.

How do Men labour to engross all Trade to themselves, by exclaiming against their Neighbour, and by under-selling them, at one Time, that they may engage the Buyer to become their Customer, of whom they will surely fetch out their Penny-worths, in the next Bargain?

WHEN you have sold too dear, and so cheated your Brother, though Conscience, in Times of Sickness and Danger, begins to contend with you about it, yet *how loth are you to make Restitution for the Wrong you have offered?* How unlike are you to them in *Nehemiah?* Then said they, *we will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest.* If one should say, *So GOD shake out every Man from his House, and from his Labour, that performeth not this Promise, even thus be he shaken out and emptied,* you would hardly say, *Amen,* and praise the LORD.

WHEN Men buy a Commodity, *how apt are they to discommend it,* to bring down the Price, to say, it is naught, when all the while they know it is offered on easy Terms? How do Buyers take the Advantage of the Seller's Ignorance of the Worth of his own Goods? There is a cursed Proverb amongst *English-men,* but in too great Request, 'That a Man may not only sell as dear, but buy as cheap as he can.'

can.' Few like *Austin*, that bought a Book, at an unskillful Stationer's Hands, for an inconsiderable Price, and afterwards gave the Value of it.

How often do Buyers (even as Sellers often say, they will not, they cannot take a Penny less for such a Commodity) answer, that they will not give a Farthing more, for what they have cheapened, and yet all the while intend to come up to the Seller's Price.

How common is it for Men to take up Wares, and to promise Payment at such a Day, and yet fail? Yea, how do they promise, tho' they know they shall not be able to be as good as their Word? It were better for thee to beg thy Bread, than thus to steal from thy Neighbour. Thou art ashamed to beg, as he of old; thou shouldst be ashamed much more to do worse, to defraud thy Neighbour. *The getting of Treasures by a lying Tongue, is a Vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek Death.*

How few are there, that in their Buying and Selling give a Proof of their Loving their Neighbours as themselves, their Neighbours Goods and Welfare as their own?

O! when will ye be holy in all Manner of Conversation? Holy in your Trades, as well as in your Church Assemblies? Holy in the Shop, and in all secular Employment? So holy, as to abide with God in your Calling? When will ye labour with your Hands, that ye may be able to give, and not only to receive? When will ye trade in Fear, and be in the Fear of the LORD all the Day; and that lest your Shops should prove your Bane, and whilst seeking after the Mammon of this Life, ye

lose the true Substance? Is this thy Prayer before thou enterest upon thy Calling? (O that it were!)
 “**LORD** help me to trade for Thee, whilst for myself; and for the Good of my Neighbour's Soul, Body and Goods, as well as for my own.”

How few, among all the several Sorts of Traders, render to Cæsar, the Things that are Cæsar's?

How can you quiet your Consciences to steal Custom, as many of you do? What is it, save the Law, that gives you Right to all you have? And by the Law, so much of your Goods is the King's: It is alienated from you to his Crown and Revenue: How dare you cheat him? Should you think it hard Measure to pay so great a Tribute? Have you forgot what *Christ* (who came under the Law) did? Tho' Tribute was exacted of Him, when the Children were free, yet He would work a Miracle, rather than give Offence in denying to pay it. Why do ye not take the safest Course, if it be a disputable Matter? To be sure you will not give Offence to GOD, to the King, to your Conscience, by paying Customs; but you may to all by defrauding. Do you herein as you would be dealt with? If you were the Political Father, would you have your Children cheat you? Do not you by Bribes and otherwise tempt the King's Officers to be false to their Trust, and to damn their Souls by Perjury and Treachery?

Lastly. CONSIDER, that Self-Love and Self-Interest are prevalent, to bribe your Judgments, and to enslave them to your base Passions. O! Consider how apt is every one to favour himself, and to suck in any absurd Reasonings, whereby he may greaten himself? If you say, (as they of the Silver Shrines, *This brings in our Gain*) We cannot

cannot subsist without stealing Customs? How else can we live? A Father will tell you, It ill becomes a Christian's Mouth to ask, How shall I live? Not one that *Christ* called to forsake Trades and Professions, did ever answer Him, I must not give over my Gain. 'Till you can relinquish unlawful Gains, you are none of *Christ's* Disciples. Those in the *Acts*, that burnt their unlawful Books, to the Loss of Thousands, shewed themselves true Converts, so mightily grew the Word and prevailed. When *Tyre* shall be converted, her Trading and Dealings shall be sacred, her Merchandize and her Hire shall be Holiness to the LORD.

HERE give me Leave to add the Sin of LYING, too common among all Sorts of Traders, as well as others. And truly this Sin comes not improperly under the Head of Injustice. Justice, even when it is not taken most largely; (so it is taken for all Religion) comprehends our whole Duty to our Neighbour, as to Matters of Right: Thus, by Virtue of the Fifth Commandment, to do justly, is to give our Parents their due Honour, whether they be natural, civil, or spiritual. In Respect to the Sixth, it is to preserve the Life of our Neighbour, and to have a Care that we injure him not in his Being. In Reference to the Seventh, it is to preserve his just Relations, and not touch them, or cause the Violation of their Faith to him. In Reference to the Eighth, it is to preserve his Estate, and not meddle with his Goods. The Ninth requires, that we preserve his good Name, and not defame him, nor do any Prejudice to his Credit, no more than we would to his Estate: And by Virtue of the Tenth, we are to moderate our very Desires, so as not to envy him that which is his, nor to long to have it in our Possession. And to be sure there is Righteousness

to be looked for in Words, as well as in Actions. But alas! how doth the Sin of Lying abound among us? *For this GOD hath a Controversy with the Land.* Is there not Need to take Heed every one of his Neighbour, and not to trust in any Brother? Will not every one deceive his Neighbour, and not speak the Truth? Have they not taught their Tongues to speak Lies? If you are not Cozening-Liars, or False-Witness-Liars, yet are you not Reviling-Liars? Do you not, upon every petty Difference, speak of one another ye care not what? Do ye not spread lying Defamations? Is not the Fawning-Liar common among us? Their Words are the Words of Jacob, but their Hands are the Hands of Esau. *The Words of their Mouths are smoother than Butter, but War is in their Hearts: Their Words are softer than Oil, yet are they drawn Swords.* Is there not also many a News-telling-Liar among us? They believe in their Consciences, that it is false, what they relate; and yet, to promote an Interest, to make Hearts glad with Lies, they will spread that which is false. How many Officious-Liars have we, who tell Lies for some good End, as they think? The highest End is God's Glory: But will ye speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for Him? The Vulgar reads the Text, *Numquid Deus indiget vestro mendacio?* What! hath GOD Need of your Lie? It is a Dishonour to GOD to be thus helped. And if we must not speak Evil, that Good may come to GOD, sure then we may not speak Evil, that Good may come to ourselves.

How can you think you are GOD's Children? GOD engageth Himself for his People, that surely they will not lie, surely they are my People, Children that will not lie. Austin long ago gave his Judgment concerning Lying, that "A Man must not
" tell

“ tell a Lie to save the whole World : If it were
 “ saith he) to save thy Father or thy Mother out
 “ of Hell, if possible it could be, thou must not tell
 “ a Lie ; or if it were to save a Kingdom from
 “ Destruction :” And yet to make a little Mirth,
 or to gain a Penny, or to prevent the Frowns of a
 Superior, how do some *teach their Tongues to lie* ?
 Not considering, that *all Liars shall have their Por-
 tion in the burning Lake ; that herein they are like
 the Devil, who is the Father of Lies, and most unlike
 GOD, who cannot lie.* O then ! *put away Lying,
 and speak the Truth ;* away with mental Reserva-
 tions and Jesuitical Equivocations. Let thy Tongue
 be the faithful Interpreter of thy Heart. Be faith-
 ful in your Promises and Engagements, be not *yea
 and nay.*



C H A P. XXVI.

Their Covetousness.

IF there be so much Unrighteousness, no Won-
 der that there is also much Covetousness. Co-
 vetousness is the Seed of all Unrighteousness, *the
 Root of all Evil.* It was *Jezebel's* Covetousness
 that made her unjustly deprive *Naboth* of his Vine-
 yard. If I cannot prevail with Heaven, I will to
 Hell for an Estate, is the Voice of Covetousness :
 Yea, this is that which will put Men, not only on
 Injustice to others, but to GOD Himself ; it will
 make them offer Violence to Religion, to Divine
 Honour, and whatever is sacred in the World.
 That Man will stick at no Abuse of GOD, whose
 GOD is his Gain. And is not Covetousness and
 Earthly-

Earthly-mindedness an epidemical Sin? This is the Grave which never saith *it is enough*, but like *Solomon's Horse-leech it cries give, give*. O! what boundless Appetites have many, who can neither use what they have, nor put a Period to what they desire: As in the Sea one Wave riseth above another, so here every Desire of having is outgone by a new Desire of getting.

ARE *not your Cares for Riches*? Do not your Thoughts run out, O! how shall I thrive in the World, get more Estate, Custom? But not, O! how shall I get the Favour of God, and Victory over my Lusts? How sollicitous are you, every Day for the World, but how flat in your Desires to have the Image of God renewed? How dejected are you when you miss of a good Bargain; or when you meet with some Loss by Sea or Land? But how little troubled if you lose an Opportunity of Communion with the LORD? How are Men pleased with the Earth, but find no more Relish in *Christ* and his Ways than in the White of an Egg? What great Journeys have you taken, even compassed Sea and Land, to gain Riches; and hardly can go a Mile or two to meet with GOD? How is every Opportunity laid hold of to get more to the Heap? But do not you remain contented, with the least Measures of Grace: How oft have you left your Meat to serve a Customer? But when to serve the LORD *Jesus Christ*? How few aim at Riches, as a Means to carry them to a further End? They should be but as the Rounds of a Ladder, not to stand upon, but thereby to ascend higher, even to Glory. But alas! few desire the World in Subordination to God, and as a Means to glorify God; but the more they love the World, the less God is loved; and the more their Desires are carried out after Riches, the less after God. How few pursue
earthly

earthly Things in Obedience to GOD's Call? How many out of a Desire of filthy Lucre? How few seek the World with an holy Indifferency? How few reserve their Zeal, and hottest Endeavours for heavenly Things? Is not the general Cry, *Who will shew us any Good?* We need no Proof of this, there are Instances every where. How, for the getting of a Penny, will some debar themselves of Ordinances? Is it not a sufficient Excuse with some, for not attending on the Worship of GOD, that they met with a Customer? Doth not the Clock strike too fast, whilst thou art selling to Advantage? Doth not Time run away too fast? Dost thou not wish thou couldst, with *Joshua*, cause the *Sun to stand still* on a Market-Day, or on a Fair-Day, when Trading is quick? But when thou art in the Worship of GOD, *O! When will the Sabbath be gone?* When will the Duty be over, that we may sell? How many hypocritical Out-cries are there against the World? It eats up my Time: It eats up my Spirits: It robs me of Communion with GOD: We say it is an Enemy, and yet we can bosom this Snake, lodge this Enemy, that GOD would have us to kill.

How oft hath GOD charged thee against Covetousness? Take Heed and beware of it: Two Words to the same Purpose, all little enough to take thee off from earthly Pursuits. How apparently hath GOD with-drawn from thee, ever since thou wast taken with this *Dalilah*? How hardly art thou pulled out of the deep Pit, and miry Clay, to Duty, much more to GOD? And wilt thou be rich? Art thou resolved to run into the Briars? Then farewell to thee, not only in Time, but to Eternity. How many Convictions and Impressions of the blessed Spirit have your worldly Cares choaked? How have your Desires of Riches puzzled your Souls, and diverted

diverted them from minding and improving the Counsels of God and Conscience? How unlike art thou to the primitive Converts? *Paul*, when converted, *counts all Things but Dung in Comparison of Christ*. And *Zaccheus* no sooner had a Work of Grace begun upon him, but down went the World faster than ever it went up: He parts from Riches with more Freedom than he sought them: *The half of my Goods I give to the Poor; and if I have wronged any Man, I will restore four-fold*. But alas! our Hearts are as Cities without Walls, the World hath a Thorough-fare in them, and may come and go without any Pass from Heaven.

How hath this Sin deadned you to all the Worship of God? How, by the Interposition of this dark Body of the Earth, hath the Light of Heaven, yea the Light of God's Countenance, been darkened? and how hath thy Soul been benighted and clouded? They say, If a Knife be put into the Earth, it will lose its Edge: I am sure of this, that Christians, who were once lively and active for God, by engaging their Hearts to the World, have lost their Zeal, their Keeness and their Lustre. When thou hast gained Time from thy Business to discharge Duty, hast not thou missed thine Heart? Hast not thou left and lost it in the Croud? How dost thou debase thyself hereby? The Curse of *Cham* is upon thee, *a Servant of Servants thou art*, a Slave to that which thou shouldst rule over: God did not give thee a reasonable Soul that thou shouldst choose the Serpent's Curse, to crawl and feed upon the Earth. O! tremble to think what sad Effects your Covetousness may have upon you before you die. *Demas* left *Christ*, lost his Soul, ship-wreck'd his Faith, and all to embrace this present evil World. And if thou *make Haste to be rich*,
shalt

Shalt thou be innocent? Whether thou place thy Confidence and Hope in thy Gold, or in a Golden Calf, thou art guilty of Idolatry, of having other Gods besides the true God, and so dost highly offend the true God.

If you did glory in the Cross of Christ, the World would be crucified to you, and you unto the World. But alas! to which of us, is *one Day in God's Courts better than a thousand!* St. Austin said, "If one Drop of the Joys of Heaven might fall in to Hell, it would drown all the Bitterness of Hell;" so would it drown all Bitterness in the Soul, and all the Sweetness in the World. Worldly Comforts would be too coarse, too flat, too low to recreate your Hearts. Did ye but know the Honey and Milk of Canaan, ye would not mind the Onions of Egypt. What a miserable Life dost thou live? This Sin brings an Hell with it; thou art the Devil's Martyr. *They that will be rich, fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition.* Thou enjoyest neither God nor the World: Thou still desirest that which will never satisfy thy Desires. The more thou hast of the World, the more thou wantest; the more thou drinkest, the more thou thirstest; a Dropsy is upon thee, and thou knowest it not. Discontent is always the Companion of Covetousness. *Let your Conversation be without Covetousness; and be content with such Things as you have. Why wilt thou set thine Eyes upon that which is not?* Grace and Godliness is Substance: Why wilt thou let go the Substance for a Shadow? The Things of the World are Fancies, the Things of God Realities. *What Good is there to the Owners of Riches, saving the beholding them with their Eyes? Do not you all this while bear False-Witness against God? Do not you*
pro-

proclaim to the World, that GOD is not enough to fill your Desires, and that therefore you go after the Creature? It is nothing to you, to call GOD, who is *all-sufficient*, who is a *Fountain of living Water*, a *barren Wilderness*? No Wonder, that *for the Iniquity of our Covetousness*, GOD is *wrath*, and *smite us*. We are greedy of more, but what have we done with our former Talents? Account we must for one, for two, for ten Talents: The more we have, the greater will be our Account. There is a Reckoning-day at Hand. If thou art not a good Steward as sure as this Book is in thy Hand, thou wilt curse the Time that ever thou hadst an Estate, and wilt wish thou hadst been a Beggar, for then thou hadst not had so much to answer for before GOD. It is certain that thou shalt carry none of thy Estate away with thee; nothing is to be carried away, save Guilt, to Hell; if you have not rendred unto GOD *according to what you have received*, the heaping up of Wealth, is but the charging of thy Account: Thou must account, how thou hast disbursed to a Farthing.

I WILL suppose thou hast (by Neglects of thy general Calling, and by thy rising up early, and sitting up late) gained an Estate: What will thy Estate advantage thee, when the Arrows of the LORD enter thy Soul? What will the World advantage thee, when the Gout, Fever, or burning Pestilence are upon thee? What hast thou got but that which may stand with GOD's eternal Hatred? Never count thy Gains, 'till thou hast got that which is inconsistent with GOD's Wrath. Whilst you have Bonds and Bills upon others, do not you run into Arrears with GOD? And how will you discharge those Suits which GOD will commence against you? When you lie a dying, will ye not wish, that your Time, your Strength, your Spirits had

had been poured forth upon better Things, than those of this Life? That you had traded for Grace and Glory, rather than for a little gilt Clay? O ye Projectors for the World, I foresee the Troubles and Horrors, the Doubts and Fears, the Anguish and Amazements of your Souls, which your Uncertainties, as to your future State, will put you into in your dying Rooms. How will you take up such Language as this, "Fool that I was, to cumber myself about many Things, and neglect the one Thing necessary! Fool that I was, to set my Affections on Things below, (none of which give me a Drop of Water to cool my Tongue) and to neglect the Things above! O! if I had never heard of *Christ* and Glory, I had been more excusable for my earthly Cares. O! how have I disquieted myself in vain? I have heaped up Riches, and know not who shall gather them. Had I been as faithful to *Christ*, as I was to *Mammon*, O! with what Joy might I have removed hence? What abundant Entrance into the everlasting Kingdom might I have had?" O! labour to prevent the Horrors of Death, and the gnawing Worm of Conscience. It is sad, when the Sting of Death, and the Worm Conscience, bite the Man together. Riches avail not in the Day of Wrath; but Righteousness delivereth from Death. Believe it, it will cut you to the Heart, to think that less Pains would have served for eternal Life, than you have bestowed for temporal Goods. This Plague attends the covetous Man, the more he desires, and heaps up, the less he is desired, and the less he is lamented when he dies. So the covetous Man doth no Good with his Riches whilst he liveth; but when he is dead, his Riches come to be disposed of. *The Riches of a Sinner are laid up for the Just.* How can you choose but tremble at Dooms-Day? You cannot desire the Coming of *Christ*: If the Church cries, *Come, LORD JESUS, come quickly,* you

you cannot join in that Prayer, for your Hearts are glued to this present World: You prefer *Paris* before Paradise. It is to the Saints Loss to be kept so long from Heaven; but you count it not so: You cannot say, *Thy Kingdom come*. What will you do in that Day, when all the Estate and Friends of *Dives* cannot relieve? Riches are like Briars and Thorns, good to stop Gaps, but not to lay in our Beds, and set our Hearts upon, lest *we lie down in Sorrow*.



C H A P. XXVII.

Their Envy.

ENVY is a Sin seldom confessed, but yet much diffused among the Professors of Religion.

The Spirit that dwelleth in us, lusteth to Envy.

And indeed Covetousness and Envy are never asunder; they are Sins against the same Command: Such as long that what is their Neighbour's should be theirs, envy to him that which is his; and such as envy to him that which is his, long to have it to be theirs. How desirous are they to grasp all to themselves? And therefore how apt to be envious at the Power, Greatness, Riches, if not Goodness of others? Doth not the Experience that you have of your own Hearts testify, that this Spirit is stirring and acting in you? The Poor envy the Rich, the Base the Honourable, as if they had the less, because others have so much. But sure, maligning the Prosperity of others is not from the Spirit of God. He that giveth freely to all, would not have us envy those to whom He gives more freely than to
our-

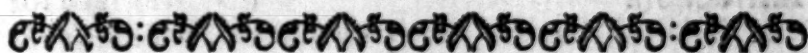
ourselves; and He that giveth us more, doth not envy us for what we have. If you have not so much as others, it is because you are unfit to receive, not because God is unwilling to give.

Is there not a greater Readiness in us, to detract from Mens Worth, than to honour and exalt them? To write down their Blots and Imperfections, than their Virtues and Graces? How dull sighted are we, as to the Virtues of our Brethren; but quick sighted as Eagles to discern their Imperfections? The Beams of Virtue are not seen, not taken Notice of, but a Mote in a Brother's Eye is soon espied.

ARE we not more greedy to receive and spread any Thing whereby our Neighbour is obscured, than what tends to his Praise? And is not this the Reason hereof, the Desire we have to shine alone, to have none to vie with, much less to excell us?

THE Beasts do not envy one another, but Men do; yea, the Devils envy not one another; some Men are herein worse than Devils. No Wonder if there have been Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, and Heresies, whilst Envyings have abounded amongst us. *Wrath is cruel, and Anger outrageous, but who is able to stand before Envy?* The Malignity of this Sin appears, in that it strikes directly at the Providence of God, who disposeth of Mens Conditions, according to his Sovereignty and Wisdom: It hath a tacit Accusation of God, for raising up some so high, and laying others so low: It is deeply unsatisfied with God's Bounty to the Children of Men, that He gives so liberally to some, whereas He is not bound to any. Whilst others complain against God, for making the World no better, the envious Man is troubled that He hath done so well for his Creatures.

No Wonder the Apostle reckoneth *Envy* among the gross Sins of *Murder*, *Uncleanness*, *Idolatry*, *Witchcraft*, and concludes, *Heaven is no Place for such, They which do such Things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of GOD.* This is a Sin so damnable, and so ugly, making you so much like the Devil, that it is high Time you watch against it, mourn for it, and seek its Ruin. O! when shall we hear the Exhortation, *Let us not be desirous of Vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another? When shall we in Honour prefer one another? When shall we, like Barnabas, when we see the Grace of GOD, rejoice? When shall Ministers reprove the Joshuas, that are envying for their Sakes, in Moses's Words, I would to GOD all the People of the LORD did prophesy? When shall we, like John the Baptist, be contented to decrease, so that Christ may increase; and to be laid by, if others more able may be substituted to do GOD's Work? When shall we rejoice if GOD useth others, to convert Sinners by them, more than by us? And say, with Mr. Dod, "I would to GOD that I were the worst Minister in England;" his Meaning was, that all should excell him in Gifts and Graces. O! when shall we, instead of envying our Brother, bless GOD for him? If he hath more than we have, more Strength, Parts, Riches, Honours, or Graces, the Account he must pass with GOD is greater; let us pity him, rather than envy him: Believe it, GOD is wiser than we are, and if his Distributions are various, we have as many Talents as we can well improve. Let us look to our own Duty in the Places wherein GOD hath set us; and pray for them that have ten Talents more than we have, that they may serve the LORD ten Times more than we can.*



C H A P. XXVIII.

The Sins of Family-Governors.

HOW guilty are such of you as have Families to govern, of not commanding your Household to serve GOD? Of how few can GOD say, as He did of Abraham, *I know him, that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the LORD.* By your Authority you should command them to subject their Hearts, Wills, and Consciences, to the Will and Pleasure of JEHOVAH; but alas! how many of you have been careless in this? Your Children and Servants, yea Wives, must know your Authority upon worldly Accounts, you command them imperiously enough to fulfill your Will and Pleasure, to serve you; but how Gallio-like are you, little caring whether they obey the LORD?

2. How much Passion have you discovered when Children and Servants, yea and Wives too, submit not to your Will and Pleasure: But when do they see so much Zeal against their Neglect of GOD's Work, as they find in you when they neglect your Commands? These Passions may well make your Inferiors believe, that you value more your Authority, than GOD's, the having your own Will obeyed, than that GOD's should be observed.

3. How many Governors are there, that shew great Care for the Bodies of their Families, but not for their Souls? Meat, and Drink, and Cloaths, or Money

to buy them, they shall have; but none or little Instruction.

How little do you catechise your Families? How seldom do you ask them any Questions concerning the first Principles of the Doctrine of *Christ*? If you do catechise your Children, as you ought, in Obedience to those Divine Commands, *Train up a Child in the Way wherein he should go: Bring up your Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the LORD:* Yet how few of you catechise the rest of your Household, your Servants and Wives, though they be but Babes in Religion, Children in Understanding, and this Milk is appointed for Children in Understanding as well as Age? Neither doth the Work of catechising them belong unto Ministers, but unto you; for it belongs to all that have a Charge of Souls; and you are charged not only with your Childrens, but with your Servants, and with your Wives Souls. Whatever any of you may fancy, there never comes a Wife, a Child, or Servant into any of your Families, but with this Warrant from the great LORD of Heaven and Earth, “Keep the Soul of this Wife, this Child, this Servant; for if it be missing amongst the Number of my Sheep at the great Day, through thy Neglect, thy Soul shall go for it.” Hence not only should your Children be taught by you, but your Wives and Servants. The Wife is commanded to *learn of her Husband at Home*, and the Husband to *walk with her as a Man of Knowledge*: And your Servants should be trained by you in Religion, as *Abraham’s Servants* were.

How seldom do you converse personally with every one in your Families, concerning the practical Part of Religion? How seldom do you ask them any Questions, how it is with their Souls; and what

what they think will become of them to Eternity? Are you not as great Strangers to the State of their Souls, as you are to the Souls of the *Indians*? If their Bodies be in Danger, Meat, Physick, Attendance are procured; but their Souls may perish in Formality or Carelessness, for any Help you afford them. Some Governors never treat with their Households about their spiritual Estate from one Year to another: Hence comes the great Apostacy of our Times. The LORD humble us, and deliver us from Blood-guiltiness. Many a Husband may cry out, My Wife's Soul is like to perish, through my Default: Many a Parent, I am verily guilty of the Blood of my Child: And many a Master may impute to his own Account, all the Disorders of his Servants; for that they have no personal Conference with them about original Corruption, Regeneration, Justification, Sanctification, or Glory. Perhaps thou prayest in thy Family every Day, but not knowing the inward Workings of their Hearts towards God or Sin, thou knowest not how to pray as thou oughtest; thou knowest not what to confess, and what to pray for, nor what to bless God for.

4. *HAVE you walked with that Gravity before your Wives, Children, and Servants as ye ought? Have you not made yourselves vile by Lightness or unseemly Carriages? Governors of Families are the Viceroy's of God; they are in the Place of God; and therefore should keep up their Authority, and not run into such Vanity or Familiarity with their Inferiors, as to breed in them a Contempt of the Ordinance of God.*

5. *You have given your Children and Servants Time to work for yourselves; have you afforded them Time to serve God in?* Too many use their Inferiors

riors as they use their Beasts; they work and feed their Beasts, but never instruct; no more do they instruct their Inferiors. When do you call your Wives, Children, Servants into your Closet, and not only press them to look after their Souls, and in order thereunto, to spend some Time in Prayer, Reading, and Meditation; but tell them how God wrought on you, how he awakened you, what Corruptions prevailed with you, and how God helped you to crucify them: How do you know but the same Motives might melt and turn their Hearts too?

6. *HAVE not you miscarried as to the Time for the Management of your religious Work in your Houses?* Some Governors pray in the Morning too early; so early, with a small Part of their Family, whilst others are in Bed, or in the Service of the World, that they worship not God together, as they ought; and this is passed over with Silence; but if they miss of their Servant in the Shop or Field, how angry is the Governor? He cries out, I shall be undone by the Unfaithfulness of my Wife, Children, Servants; but sees not a greater Danger, a more probable Ruin falling on him, for not having his Family to worship God with him.

OTHERS defer Morning Prayer 'till it be almost Noon. They will adventure into all worldly Employments (as we say) without Fear or Wit; they see no Need of God to protect them from outward or inward Dangers; no Need of God's Blessing, 'till they are ready to dine; and then some Collects must be said, some short Prayers perhaps run over with more Haste than the Boy that saith his Lesson, that they may rise up to eat, drink, and play.

AND

AND as some are unseasonable in their Duties in the Morning, so others at Evening. Whilst their Strength lasts to serve the World, they attend it; and then, come let us go to Prayer; when the poor Wife, Children, and Servants, had rather be in Bed. The Governor prays dully enough, and that while the poor Family sleep, or nauseate the Duty; and so, like *Eli's Sons*, these *Sons of Belial* cause their People to abhor the Offering of the LORD.



C H A P. XXIX.

The Sins of Husbands and Wives.

HUSBANDS and Wives are called to Reflection on their Miscarriages, jointly, severally.

JOINTLY. For their not being so careful of their Choice, as they should have been; not seeking God enough in a Matter of so great Consequence, wherein the Souls of each other were so highly concerned. *Be ye not unequally yoked with Unbelievers: For what Fellowship hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness? And what Communion hath Light with Darkness?* That they came together upon low, earthly, and lustful Motives, for Profit, Pleasure, Beauty, rather than to further the Kingdom of Christ. That they did not by Prayer and Fasting try to live unmarried, though the Apostle told them of the Advantages of serving Christ thereby. *He that is unmarried, careth for the Things that belong to the LORD, how he may please the LORD.*

SEVERALLY.

SEVERALLY. Husbands, *ye have not loved your Wives, as Christ the Church*; though the Command be exprefs. But though you have not been Adulterers in any gross Act, yet how oft have you wished the Bond of Marriage were broken? And have not you had Eyes full of Adultery? Hath not your Love to others degenerated into secret Lust? *Christ* is patient to his Church, but hath *your Love suffered all Things*? Upon light Matters, what Frowns, I will not say what sharp Words: Hath not Family-Prayer been neglected through your Wrath? *Christ* gives no Occasion of Jealousy; but have not some of you? The LORD searcheth Hearts. *Christ's* Love is bountiful; how short have you kept your Wives, contrary to your Engagements to endow them *with all your worldly Goods*? *Christ* keeps Company with the Wife of his Bosom; but have not some of you been more Abroad than at Home? *Christ* edifieth his Church: Do ye dwell with your Wives as Men of Knowledge? *Christ* doth communicate Secrets to his Spouse: Are not ye Strangers to the Hearts, though perhaps not to the Bosoms, of your nearest Relations? *Christ* doth confer often with his Church about the Mysteries of GOD: I wish you did so. I fear some of you are Silver-tongued Abroad, forward to speak of *Christ*, but dumb at Home even to your Wives as well as Children. The Woman learns not, though she ask her Husband at Home. *Christ* gives the sharpest Rebuke to his offending Spouse privately, and when He gets her alone; But do not you reprove before Servants and Children? Hereby they learn Prowardness, when brought into this Relation, and at present slight the Wives of your Bosom. *Christ* doth not blaze his Wife's Infirmities; but so have ye. *Christ* puts the best Constructivn on what his Spouse doth. *The Spirit is willing, though the Flesh be weak*. But do not you put the worst? When
your

your Lusts are quenched, your Love is gone. *Christ* doth pity his Church as the weaker Vessel; if ye did so, the Family would be the better governed. *Christ* doth sympathize with his Church: In all her Afflictions he is afflicted; but how fretful, churlish, and *Nabal*-like are you, when the Hand of *GOD* is heavy on your nearest Relations? *Christ* doth vindicate his Spouse, and is greatly displeased when she suffers from the World; but do some of you deride your Wives, and not frown when they are wronged and abused? *Christ* doth not upbraid his Spouse with her low Condition before He put Honour on her; but alas! How oft have ye upbraid what the Condition of your Wives was before you cast your Eyes upon them? *Christ* gave his Life for his Church: What hast thou done and suffered to save the Soul of thy Wife? *Christ* rules his Church, not with a Rod of Iron, but with a Scepter of Love. Is your Dominion exercised with Discretion and Love? Are all Things done in Charity? Is she to thee as a loving Hind or Roe? *Christ* doth not count his Spouse as a Servant, but a Friend; He doth not domineer over his Church, but how many Husbands use their Wives hardly better than Servants? *Christ* notwithstanding keeps up his Authority over his Church, but do not many Husbands loose it through too much Uxoriousness, and make themselves contemptible, by yielding to their Wives as *Adam* to his, whence came at first all Sin and Misery into the World? When *Christ* doth command his Wife, his Church, He doth it mildly: *We pray you in Christ's Stead.* But many Husbands imperiously enough, *GOD* knoweth, when for Love sake they should rather intreat. *Christ* doth love his Spouse, though He gains nothing by her; but alas! How many are severe enough to their Wives, when they fail of that Estate, they expected from them?

As Husbands fail, so do Wives; even as the Church is subject unto Christ, so should ye have been to your own Husbands in every Thing. But how have ye affronted your Light? The true Church of Christ loves him inwardly, as well as outwardly: So should ye have loved your Husbands; but alas! How little have ye shewed the Union betwixt the Church and Christ by your Affections? The Church loves Christ more than Angels: Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire besides Thee. But how many Wives are commending others Husbands more than their own? If my Husband were thus, and thus. Thy Husband should be to thee the most precious of all Persons, the most lovely in thine Eyes. Not Parts and Gifts, but the good Pleasure of God should be the Ground of this special Love. The Church honours Christ above all other Persons in the World; but have not some of you mean and low Thoughts of your Husbands? The Church is subject to Christ in all Things; but will not some of you wear what you please, go where you please, eat what you please, and employ yourselves in what you please? Yea, though contrary both to your Husbands commands, and entreaties? The Church fears Christ: So should Wives: I say not either should, with a slavish, but both should, with a reverential fear. Remember Michal, She despised her Husband in her Heart, (she did not express her slighting of him, as many do, in Words) and she had no Child unto the Day of her Death. God took the Husband's Part, and put a Mark of Displeasure upon her. The Church loves Christ more and more; but O the Decays of Womens Affections to their Husbands! Partly through Levity, and partly through Age, and partly through cross Providences! The Church doth commend Christ; But seldom are Wives careful herein, to imitate the Church of God. How many

ny do blazon their Infirmities, rather than commend their graces? The Church is careful to please *Christ* in all Things: *The married Women should care (study) to please her Husband*, by her Attire, Behaviour, Words. She should go, speak, and do so, as may render her most acceptable in his sight, in every Thing. How many cross Wives are there, that love to vex, rather than to delight their Husbands? *The Church bears patiently Rebukes from Christ*: So should Wives; as *Sarah* was commended for her Meekness. *The Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, is in the Sight of GOD, of great Price*. Perhaps the Wife will tell me, these are but Trifles that I cross my Husband in: I must tell thee, to break the Order of GOD for Trifles will greaten thy Sin at the Day of Accounts. What wilt thou, darest thou for so slender a Matter tread down the Law of thy GOD, and hazard the Ruin of thy Soul? O! consider This, and turn not your Duties to your Husbands into Matter of Talk and Pastime, as the Manner of most Women is.



C H A P. XXX.

The Miscarriages of Parents, and Children.

PARENTS, how little do you plot for the Good of future Generations? How little do you care whether GOD hath a Name when you be dead and gone? It is through your Default, that the Name of *Christ* is not had in everlasting Remembrance: If you were faithful, how would the Generations

come bless the LORD in your behalf? If you were active and diligent, you might convey Holiness down to your Posterity. The World would soon mend, the Church of *Christ* would soon regain its antient Lustre if ye did but faithfully discharge your Duties to your Children: You might *suffer little Children to come to Christ*, yea, you might fill the Kingdom of Heaven; but do not you rather fill the Kingdom of Hell? And as *Jeroboam made Israel to Sin*, do not you instead of leading them the Way to Heaven, lead them the Way to Hell? O! consider seriously and sadly how far you are guilty with Respect to the Souls of your Children.

1. *By giving them bad Examples.* *Ham's* not covering his Fathers Nakedness was a Sin conveyed down to all his Race. Your Pride, Sensuality, Carelessness in the Worship of GOD, your Passion towards your Wives, and Wives towards their Husbands, your Frowardness towards Servants, teach your Children so to carry themselves towards Others. One check'd his Son, and said, never Parent had so wicked a Child; yes (said the Son) my Grandfather had.

2. *By humouring your Children:* Teaching them early to be proud of their fine Clothes, and to revenge, Come, give me a Blow, saith the Mother to the Child. Many, like Apes, kill their Children with hugging Them. *Austin* tells a sad Story of one *Cyrellus*, who loved an only Son immoderately, and let him do (without Correction) what he would. Afterwards this Son, in a fit of Drunkenness, offers Violence to his Mother, killed his Father, wounded mortally two of his Sisters, and would have ravished another. Through foolish Pity, Parents, especially Mothers, give the Reins to

their Children, when they are young, and thereby they grow headstrong, and are a Shame to the Mother that bore them. The sparing of the Rod is the Ruin of the Child. Do not you reprove your Children, as old fond *Eli* did? Thereby he brought a Plague upon himself and upon his Posterity. What saith one? "Never cease Convincing or "Correcting 'till thou hast subdued the Spirit of "thy Child, if he contends with Thee." You pretend such Harshness is inconsistent with Love; but I say from the LORD, such Fondness is consistent with Hatred; and I am sure the LORD is on my Side, in this. *He that spareth the Rod-hateth his Son, he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.* Is it Love to suffer a Wound in thy Child to fester, rather than to apply a painful Corrosive for the Cure? But what saith the fond Mother? If the Child should be the worse for my Correction, it would be a Trouble to me whilst I live. O that such a doting Mother would hear the LORD himself! *Correct thy Son, and he shall give thee Rest, yea he shall give Delight to thy Soul. Withhold not Correction from the Child: for if thou beatest him with the Rod, he shall not die. Foolishness is bound in the Heart of a Child, but the Rod of Correction shall drive it out.*

3. BY not acquainting them with the LORD, and his Ways, and that betimes. Hath not GOD commanded, *Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* And is not Childhood and Youth the Time wherein Solomon adviseth the Children of Men should be trained up in the Way wherein they should go? O Parents! if GOD be worth your own Acquaintance, is He not worth the Acquaintance of such as are

so near and dear unto you? Can you without trembling think, that as soon as Death breaks up your House, you may to Heaven, and your Children must to Hell, and thither through your Default? But if you should die in this Neglect of instructing your Children, you will be miserable as well as they: And O! what a Greeting will there be hereafter between ungodly Parents and Children? What an Hearing will it be to your tormented Souls, to hear your Children cry out against you, "All this that we suffer was long of you, you should have taught us better, and did not:" What an Addition will such Outcries be to your Misery?

4. *By not redressing the disorderly Carriage of your Children towards one another.* How few Rebecca's are there? She was careful to remove Jars and Mischiefs that might arise between her two Sons.

5. *By not praying for your Childrens Souls,* and against those very Particulars which their natural Constitutions leads them most too.

2. *By not correcting them aright:* As to Time, not early enough; *He that loveth him correcteth him betimes;* not, whilst the Fault is fresh in his Thoughts, with all the aggravating Circumstances thereof: Not with Compassion enough. "You have Reason (saith Mr. Dod) to be angry with yourselves, rather than to be bitter to your Children; for you correct your own Sin in your Children. If the Child be froward, hath he not seen his Parents brawling and contentious?" Not ushering Correction with Prayer, that God would bless the Word and the Rod. Commonly Parents
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correct in a Passion, whereby Prayer is hindered, and the Medicine becomes invalid.

7. BY *being angry without a Cause, or above the Desert.* Anger must be according to the Nature of the Offence. If Parents be always chiding or correcting, they make their Children resolute. *Provoke not your Children to Wrath.* Some Parents want natural Affections, and are too severe: But Correction, like Physick, if too frequent, will work no more with Children, than our Meat with us.

8. BY *loving your Children more than God*, loving them as they are yours, not as they are God's as they bear your Image, not God's, for their Beauty and Parts rather than for their Graces; loving a beautiful Child, that is void of Grace, more than a deformed Child, though eminent in Grace; loving one excessively, as *Jacob, Joseph*; hence *Joseph* is envied by the rest: Prodigal Favours to some, especially if without Reason, are offensive to others, who are less respected: Loving so, as loth to let them go when God calls for them. You cannot say as *Eli*, *it is the LORD, let him do as seems Him good.* God pulls and you pull, and you quarrel with God about the Gourd, and you think you do well to be angry. *Job* blessed God, when God took all away at once by one Blow.

9. BY *not devoting them to some honest Callings* but letting them live in Idleness, and so they grow up Monuments of your Neglect. But if you do provide a Calling for your Children, is it not what is most gainful, rather than what will be most useful to the Soul? Had you not rather have them rich Factors among Idolaters (where they learn

the Manners of the Heathens) then to have a meaner Calling at Home, where the Gospel is preached in Power and Purity?

10. BY *not matching them to godly Persons*, but rather to the Rich: Hereby ye shew that the Silver Shrines are in higher Repute than Grace and Godliness.

11. BY *giving all to your Children*, though the Church of God hath more need of it. Hereby you evidence that you prefer not *Zion* before your chief Joy: That you love the outward Grandeur of your Children more than the Prosperity of the Church. It is a Wonder (saith Mr. Baxter) how so many seemingly holy, can quiet their Consciences in such a Sin as this is? If one of you have two or three hundred Pounds *per Annum*, it is a Wonder if you leave an hundred Pounds a Year of it to pious or charitable Uses. Nay, do not Parents leave all to their Children, when they have apparent Proofs that they will spend it in the Service of Hell? O! Let Parents tremble. What, wilt thou unable and strengthen thy Children to rebel against God? Put Fuel to the Fire? Put Swords into their Hands to fight against the most High?

PARENTS, I beseech you look diligently to your Duties; be humbled for these and such like Miscarriages. O! look about you, and you will see a sad Apostasy in Children; Parents civil, the Children debauched: Parents godly, the Children formal or loose: Parents eminent for Grace, Children notorious for Lewdness. Let your Bowels turn within you to see so great a Degeneracy. Double your Diligence, that there may be an holy seed. Knock off the Chains

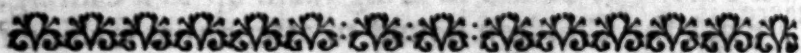
of Hell from your Children what you may: Lay not out all your Time how they may be rich. It is no Time to seek great Things for yourselves; seek them not. Pity the Souls of your Children, that are Slaves to the Devil. How can ye mind your Trades, Fields, Bodies whilst the Souls of your Children are perishing? How can ye see the Devil driving your Children to Sin and Hell, and ye stand still with a *Gallio-Spirit*? Go to your Closets, and ask your Hearts, whether the Soul be not the principal Part of the Child? And whether that needs not your Care more than the Body? Do not throw away the Blade to preserve the Scabbard. God hath set you to watch their Souls, to train up their Souls, to provide for their Souls: If you do not, what is your Love more than a *Pagan's*, a *Turk's*, towards your Children? You think you should be unnatural if you should not lay up for your Children; but here is the best laying up, to lay up a Stock of Prayers for them, and a Stock of Counsel and Instruction in them. O Parents! Once more I beseech you, put on Bowels of Compassion. Pity the perishing Souls of your own Children. Command your Children to keep the Way of the LORD: Suffer them not to fashion themselves according to the Course of the World. Connive not at them in practising what you think is abominable in the Worship of God. Remember they are God's Children more than your's. *All Souls are mine.* God claims a special right in them; *thy Sons and thy Daughters whom thou hast born unto me.* If you neglect your Duties, you and your Children are like to have sad Greetings, when you meet before the LORD another Day. How will your Children lay their Hells and Torments

ments to your Doors? How will they curse the Day they were born of such fond Women, who indulged them in their Neglects of God? Cursed be the Day that ever I saw the Passion, the Pride, the Formality of my Father, or of my Mother; for thereby I learned to sin against the LORD. O your Examples undid me! I had not come to this Place of Torment had it not been for you.

CHILDREN, are not you also greatly faulty towards your Parents? If Children be richer than their Parents, how irreverent are they? How over familiar with their Parents? As if they had forgot the *first Commandment with Promise*. How disobedient are they to their lawful Commands? Tho' the Command of GOD be express, *Children obey your Parents in all Things*; and it is added, *for this is well-pleasing unto the LORD. Children obey your Parents in the LORD, for this is right. Honour thy Father and thy Mother (which is the first Commandment with Promise) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayst live long on the Earth.* Was Christ subject to his Parents, and should not you be subject to yours? Sure you should obey them as far as could be without Sin, though their Commands crossed your natural Desires. How stout and rebellious are Children when corrected? How few can say, *We have had Fathers of our Flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them Reverence?* This Sin so provoked GOD, that He made it capital in the Days of old. *If a Man have a stubborn and rebellious Son, which will not obey the Voice of his Father, or the Voice of his Mother, and that when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them; then shall his Father and his Mother lay Hold of him, and bring him out unto the Elders of his City, and shall say, this our Son is stubborn and rebellious; and all*
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the Men of his City shall stone him with Stones, that he die: So shalt thou put Evil away from among you. How rebellious are Children in refusing the Callings which Parents have appointed for them? If the Parent be bound to bring them up to a Calling, are not the Children bound to attend that Calling? Brethren, let every Man wherein he is called, therein abide with GOD. Christ probably was brought up in his reputed Father's Calling. Is not this the Carpenter? How disobedient are Children in their Marriages? Children are the Parents Goods; so GOD reckoneth them, yea so the Devil reckoneth them. When the Devil had Commission to meddle with Job's Goods, he falls on the Children. Some are worse than Ishmael: Nature and Civility made him submit to his Mother for the Choice of his Wife. If Children must obey their Parents in little, much more in weighty Matters. How little have you requited your Parents? This you are bound unto, *To shew Piety at Home; and to requite Parents, is good and acceptable before the LORD.* Your Parents took Care of you when you were as Beasts; you had your Life and Education from them, and do you slight them when old or weak? How are you degenerated from your Parents Commands and Examples? There are few true Rechabites, who forbore Wine from Generation to Generation. It makes my Heart ach when I read, that *the People served the LORD all the Days of Joshua, and all the Days of the Elders that out-lived Joshua, who had seen all the great Works of the LORD, that He did for Israel; but there arose another Generation after them, which knew not the LORD.* In vain will ye trust in your baptismal Relation to GOD, that you have Abraham to your Father: GOD's Judgments will be more heavy on you, than on others, when *the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out.* You will be ready to curse the Day you came

came of such Parents, that ever you had such holy Instructions and Examples, to no Purpose, save to greaten your Condemnation.



C H A P. XXXI.

The Sins of Masters and Servants.

FIRST, you Masters, see how guilty you are.

I. SHOULD not your Eyes, like David's, have been upon the Faithful of the Land, that they might dwell with you? How curious should you have been in this Particular? Ye would not buy an Horse, an House, a Field, but ye would try them; but how careless have ye been whether your Servants were godly or no? If they were strong to labour, was not that all ye looked after? You look'd that they should be diligent in your Work; but have you looked for such as walked in a perfect Way to serve you? Hence many have been taken into your Families, who were found wanton and unclean, and thereby Religion hath suffered exceedingly: Yea, hence the Children are corrupted by evil Example, they being more apt to imitate the Servant in his Wickedness, than the Parent in his Holiness. If you had been wary in this Particular, and had procured holy Servants, by their Zeal, Forwardness, and Care of the Children, what Families might you have had!

SHOULD not you have removed wicked Servants as soon as your Counsels would not take Effect on them?

them? *David* did so. *He that worketh Deceit, and telleth Lies, shall not tarry in my Sight.* You on the contrary keep them as you do Horses, if good for Labour. It will never be said to your Glory, the Church in your House: But may it not be said, there is a Nest of Snakes, a Cage of Devils in your House.

2. ARE not you too rigorous towards your Servants? Do not you too much frown upon them? Do not you use Words of Reproach to them? *Whosoever shall say, thou Fool, shall be in Danger of Hell-fire.* Do not you strike them unnecessarily or immoderately? Have you forgotten the Commands from Heaven? *Thou shalt not rule over him with Rigour, but shalt fear thy God. Masters, give unto your Servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven. And ye Masters, forbear threatning, knowing that your Master also is in Heaven, neither is there Respect of Persons with Him.* Do you herein as you would be dealt with? Would you have God deal with you, as you deal with your Servants? Remember, you and your Servants have one and the same Master, to whom you are both accountable, you for your Rule, and they for their Subjection.

3. HAVE not you neglected to give that Direction to your several Servants, as is proper for them, so that they intrench upon each others Work, and the painful Work lies neglected? How few Mistresses, yea or Masters, are like *Solomon's* virtuous Woman, of whom it is said, *She looketh well to the Ways of her Household?* Every one should know his Place and Work in the Family, that all Things may be done decently, and

and in Order: But in how few Familles is it thus?

4. Do you give your Servants examples of Diligence? So did that virtuous Mistris: *She riseth also whilst it is Night: She girdeth her Loins with Strength, and strengtheneth her Arms: She layeth her Hands to the Spindle, and her Hands hold the Distaff: She maketh fine Linnen: She eateth not the Bread of Idleness.*

5. WHAT Love do ye shew to your Servants that are godly? Do you receive them as beloved Brethren? As Paul would have Philemon receive his Servant, after his Conversion: *Receive him not now as a Servant, but above a Servant, a Brother beloved.* A Christian Servant should be in the Place of a beloved Brother, and should be preferred before a lewd Son. *A wise Servant shall have Rule over a Son that causeth Shame: And shall have Part of the Inheritance among the Brethren.* How seldom do you shew them Good, as well as receive Good from them? When they are sick, how little Attendance and Necessaries have they, as to Diet, Fire, and Physick? How are many poor Servants cast off by them, when sick, as unprofitable Burdens?

6. Do you pay your Servants their Wages? Do you pay them fully? Hast thou not forgot that the Israelites were required, when they set any Servant free, not to let him go away empty, but *thou shalt furnish him liberally out of that wherewith the LORD thy GOD hath blessed thee.* Hast not thou abated them of their Dues, for the Time of their Sicknes, or the Time they have spent in the Service of GOD?

7. Do not you deny Liberty to your Servants to speak unto you? GOD hath set Masters over Servants;

vants; but He hath not given them Liberty to trample them under their Feet. Servants are under their Masters Power, but not their Lusts. You shew yourselves *Nabals* by this Churlishness and Austerity. He is such a Son of *Belial*, that a Man cannot speak to him.

8. Do not you suffer one Servant to tyrannize over another?

Secondly, YOU Servants that profess Religion; I have somewhat in Charge against many of you.

I. YOUR Pride, Sauciness, Familiarities with your Governors, make me think you would easily swallow the Error of old, *that we are to be subject to none but Christ*, as if your Freedom by *Christ* had exempted you from all Subjection to Men. By your refusing the Yoke of your Master's Commands, you reflect more upon your Master in the Heavens, than upon your earthly Governor: What saith the Apostle? *Let as many Servants as are under the Yoke, count their own Masters worthy of all Honour; that the Name of GOD, and his Doctrine, be not blasphemed. Servants, be obedient to them that are your Masters according to the Flesh, with Fear and Trembling, in Singleness of Heart, as unto Christ. Servants, be subject to your Masters with all Fear, not only to the Good and Gentle, but also to the Froward.*

BUT alas! how saucy are Servants? May not your Master say, *If I be a Master, where is my Fear?* How fearless are you of your Master, especially if your Masters be not rich and honourable in the Earth? Who respects GOD's Ordinance? Hence many Servants stand covered in their Masters Presence, sit before them, bow not to them, nor rise up before them.

2. Do not you when you meet together blazon the *Infirmities of your Masters?* Do not you carry yourselves as Spies, rather than as Servants? You do not herein as you would be dealt with.

3. ARE not you *disobedient to your Masters Commands, unless in what pleaseth you?* You are the Servants of your Lusts, rather than your Masters Servants: You do not obey in Singleness of Heart; yea, you are not obedient at all. The Centurion could say to his Servant, *Go, and be went.* The Heathen Servants excell some that pretend to great Religion. He is the Master, that must have his own Way: Judge then, whether you abide in the Place wherein God hath set you?

4. As some by Silence, so others dishonour their Masters by answering again. They should not answer by Way of Contradiction, or Reluctance, as Servants are apt to do. Some will even brag, how they gave Word for Word; perhaps two Words for one. Hereby their Governors, if ungodly, fall foul upon Religion. Is this the Fruit of your Prayers; running after Ministers?

5. How lazy are some Servants? Diligent only when under their Masters Eye. Few serve their Masters, as *Jacob, Laban, with all their Might.* The Command is, that you should obey in Singleness of Heart, not with Eye Service, as Men Pleasers. Mark, Eye Service stands not with Uprightness of Heart. As you would not be branded for Hypocrites, work behind your Masters Backs, as if their Eyes were upon you. Consider how short you fall of this, and mourn before the LORD in secret for your Eye Service.

6. How

6. *How imprudent are some Servants, as to the timing their Duties?* Some, when never so urgent Business is to be dispatched, will then go in secret to call upon GOD; whereas going to Bed later, and rising earlier, would prevent much Straitness as to Time and Spirit in that great Duty: Some will fall a talking of the Things of GOD to their Fellow-Servants very unseasonably, not when they are at Leisure, but when they are most busily employed for their Masters, to the hindring their Work.

7. *How many cheat and defraud their Masters?* Some cheat them of their Time, by idling it away, being Tatlers, and Busy-bodies, or gossiping it away: Others cheat them of their Money or Goods, hiring others secretly to do their Work, and paying them with their Masters Money or Goods.

8. *How many are improvident for their Masters Goods?* They will see Things spoil before their Eyes: They will give what is not their own to give: They make no Conscience to eat and drink what their Masters do not allow them: They will steal small Matters, and yet whatever they take, though but little, is the Breach of the Eighth Commandment; and the less the Temptation, the greater the Sin, that they will break GOD's Law for Trifles. What saith Mr. Dod? "If ever they
" look for sound Peace of Conscience, they must
" make Restitution of all such Things: *How much*
" *soever they steal, so much they must restore, and the*
" *fifth Part thereto.* If they keep it, they keep
" GOD's Curse with it, and a Woe unto their
" Consciences."

9. *How do many murmur under Reproofs and Corrections?* What saith the Apostle? *Servants be*

subject to your Masters, not only to the Gentle, but to the Froward; for this is thank-worthy, if a Man for Conscience towards GOD, endure Grief, suffer wrongfully: For what Glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your Faults ye take it patiently? But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with GOD.

10. *How unfaithful are many to their Masters Children? Not heeding them, and providing Meat, and other Necessaries for them, in their Masters Absence.*

11. *How many Ways do you fail towards your Fellow-Servants? Do not you seek to undermine them in the Respect their Masters bear them? Do not you labour to supplant them? Do not you envy them? Are not you unfaithful to one anothers Souls? Do not you waste Time in idle and impertinent Discourses? Are not you evil Examples to each other? Do not you suffer Sin to rest upon each other? Are not you guilty of not easing and relieving them, when they are over-charged with Business? Do not you carry yourselves proudly and magisterially towards Apprentices? Do not you join in a Confederacy to tell Tales against your Governors? And do not you charge your Fellow-Servants with Secresy therein, whereby the Name and Authority of the Master is lost?*



C H A P. XXXII.

*Their Miscarriages with Reference to the
Ministers of Christ.*

HOW little have you esteemed them? Though they were the Embassadors of the LORD of Heaven, and should have had Respect, according to the Rank of their Master that sent them; yet how little did you honour them in your Hearts? Did you know them, and esteem them highly, for their Works Sake? Have you not very much slighted both their Persons and Messlage? How many have thought they knew as much as their Ministers? How many Ministers have been slighted for their mean Parts? As if the Efficacy of the Ordinance depended on the Rhetorick of the Preacher; as if no Dainties could be brought them in a homely Dish, no Treasure in an earthen Vessel; as if GOD could not speak out of the Mouths of Babes; as if the using *Jordan* were too contemptible a Means? I have feared the Unsoundness of many Hearts, from the Itching of their Ears. *Paul* was careful to preach not with enticing Words, with the Wisdom of Words: Though he could speak with Tongues more than all; yet he desired to speak rather to Edification. A Sermon full of plain naked Scriptures, would not down in our last Times. It is observed by an Historian, that before the great Massacre in *France*, the Protestants were for a luscious Kind of Preaching. How unworthily have the Ministers of *Christ* been slighted by even such as, a little before, pretended to have had their

Life and Growth from them, and that they were the Seals of their Ministry? Have not many been ready to entertain Reports against their Ministers? And have they not lost their Esteem of them for one real or supposed Weakness of theirs? Though you have been under so many Engagements to them, for your spiritual Life; yet if you have seen a little Failing or Miscarriage in them, have not you forgot all their Worth, and all their many Years Labours and Cares for your eternal Welfare? Have not you been so far from esteeming the Messenger for the Message, that you have slighted the Message for the Messenger? Hath not this been the Language of your Hearts, if not of your Mouths, What nothing but this Preaching? Have not those who at first admired, afterwards made nothing of this heavenly Manna, because of the Commonness thereof? Have not you considered only the Matter, and not the Stamp of the Coin? Have not your Ministers oft complained to God, of the Contempt you have put upon them, and how much their Embassy hath been undervalued by you? It may be, you have thought it was no great Matter to slight them, and their Counsels: But know, therein you have slighted Christ Himself. *He that despiseth you, despiseth Me.* May you not fear it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment, than for you.

2. *How full of Prejudices have your Hearts been against your Ministers?* And you have not had the Honesty to examine the Grounds? When they have delivered Truths of a sublimer Nature than ordinary, or delivered any Thing more obscurely than at other Times, how rarely have you conferred with them about it? Have you not gone among your Companions, and filled your own and

and their Hearts with Prejudices against them? Let me publish that to thine Eye, which was once whispered in the Ear; *Take Heed what thou doest; this Man is a Roman*: Should not you much more have taken Heed of filling your own and others Hearts with Prejudice against your Ministers, seeing they were the Prophets of the Most High: These Men were Men of God: They were the special Ambassadors of Heaven? I think he said well, that Prejudice against the Preacher is great Prejudice to the Hearers. This Fever of Prejudice hath made many, like the full Stomach, to loath the Honey-Comb. Hath not God met with Repulses, whilst your Ministers have been entertained with Prejudice? So long as you have been prejudiced, though you have been convinced of many Duties, yet you have not been persuaded to obey the Truth.

3. *How little have you blessed God for the Gospel Ministry which you have enjoyed?* This distinguishing Mercy did not affect your Hearts as it ought. Some there were (but very few) would say, *Brown Bread, and the Gospel, is a Feast*. Few, like the Christians at *Constantinople*, cried out, *Better the Sun not shine, than Chrysostom be silenced*. You could bless God for Health, Estate; but not for these Luminaries of Glory, who were appointed to guide you to the heavenly *Jerusalem*.

4. *How little did you pray for them?* How little have you prayed for Gifts and Abilities to go through their whole Work, for Preservation for them, and for a sanctified Use of all God's Dispositions toward them? How little did you supplicate, that their Mouths might be kept open, and that Utterance might be given unto them, that they might open their Mouths boldly, to make known the
Mystery

Mystery of the Gospel? Have not they oft begged your Prayers, in the Words of Paul, *I beseech you, Brethren, for the LORD Jesus Christ's Sake, and for the Love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me, in your Prayers to GOD for me, that I may be delivered from them that do not believe?* And yet have not you neglected to call upon GOD for their Deliverance?

5. HAVE not you made sorry Excuses for not hearing them? How little have you believed that Word, *He that heareth you, heareth Me?* And by Consequence, that not hearing of them, was not hearing of Christ Himself. What slight Excuses have been deemed sufficient to keep you from the Shepherds Tents? The Apostle would have us *swift to hear*: Swiftneſs notes Diligence in taking the first Occaſion; but how have you, to compliment with a Friend, to indulge the Fleſh, for Fear of a little Rain, for Fear of wetting your Feet, for Fear of loſing a Customer, declined Opportunities of attending the Ambaſſadors GOD ſent you?

6. How did you miſcarry, both before, and in, and after hearing? How ſlender was your Preparation to attend upon theſe Deputies of Chriſt? How little did you meditate on the Word you were to receive at their Lips? Did you thus conſider? The Goſpel that I am about to hear, will be *the Savour of Life unto Life, or the Savour of Death unto Death*: I ſhall be nearer Heaven or Hell by this Sermon I am going to: If the Goſpel be always hid, I am a loſt Soul, and ſhall periſh: Is my Soul hungry? This is the Bread of Heaven: Is my Soul thirſty? This is the Water of Life: This is the Milk whereby I muſt grow up unto eternal Life: This Meſſenger of Heaven will be for the Fall, as well as the Riſing of many in *Iſrael*: If he be not in-
ſtrumental

strumental for my Salvation, he will be for my Damnation. How little did you consider the Excellency and Necessity of the Word that you were to partake of? That the Truths your Ministers taught you, were of as much Worth as your Souls, as Heaven, as Salvation?

How little did you pour out your Souls in Prayer unto GOD before you went to hear your Minister? Either for your Ministers, that GOD would open their Mouths, to speak the Word truly, sincerely, powerfully, seasonably, and suitably to your Condition; or for your own Souls, that GOD would open your Hearts, to entertain the Word, so as to profit by it; that you might not have open Ears, and shut Hearts; that you might not have Ears, and yet hear not, as knowing that *the hearing Ear, and seeing Eye, the LORD hath made even both of them.*

How careless were you to purge your Souls before you came to hear the Word? *Moses*, before he was to hear GOD speaking, put off his Shoes, to intimate that you should put off your earthly Affections before you come to hear GOD's Word: But have not you rushed out of your worldly Employments to many a Sermon? How careless were you to *lay apart all Filthiness, and Superfluity of Naughtiness*, that you might *receive with Meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your Souls*? If you have not come without habitual, have you not neglected actual Preparation?

WHEN you have been actually under the Ministry, have not you heard irreverently, without awful Apprehensions of GOD's Majesty and Presence? Have you said of the Place where any Minister of *Christ* hath preached, as *Jacob of Bethel*,
How

How dreadful is this Place? Have you in your hearing Sermons set yourselves in the Presence of GOD, as Cornelius did, when Peter was preaching unto him?

HAVE not you evidenced your Irreverence in hearing carelessly, dully, drowsily, sleepily? Have not you lent a more attentive Ear to a Tale, to a Fable, to a Romance, to a Ballad, to a Stage-Play, than to a Sermon? Have not you come to Church, as to an Apothecary's Shop, for a Recipe to sleep? Hath not the Gospel come unto you *in Word only, and not in Power?* When the Minister threatned you from the LORD, could you say, *My Flesh trembleth for Fear of Thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments?* When your Ministers came with Tidings of Peace, were their Feet beautiful? When they declaimed against your Sins, did you so mind what they delivered, as to be any whit troubled? Did not you *harden your Hearts as an Adamant?* Were you not so far from being troubled for your Sins, that it was your only Trouble you could not commit them without Controul? Were not you even troubled with Admonitions and Counsels, Commands and Threatnings, that crossed you in your Sins? Can you say, that you *received the Word with all Readiness of Mind?*

HAVE not you heard heartlessly? Without a real Sense of your Want of the Word, and without an Appetite to it? Had you such vehement Desires after the Treasure your Ministers were bringing you, as covetous Men have after the Treasures of the Earth? Could you ever, with David say, *My Soul breaketh for the Longing that it hath unto thy Judgments at all Times?*

HAVE

HAVE not you heard unbelievingly? Not crediting your Minister's Doctrine, and not applying it to, but shifting it off from yourselves? Have not their Sermons been unprofitable to your Souls, because *not mix'd with Faith*? Can you say, that you received their Word *as the Word of God*? That you applied it to your Souls? May not we say, with Grief of Soul, as our LORD hath said already, *You have not heard his Voice at any Time*? When you heard the Word, which is God's Word, did you hear God Himself speaking his own Word unto your Hearts?

HAVE not you been cautioned by the LORD *Jesus Christ*, and by his Ministers, *Take Heed how you hear*? And yet how oft have you heard the Ministers of *Christ* carpingly? Not with a Willingness to be judged by the Word, but to judge it, and the Preacher for it? Have not you let slip the most material Passages of the Sermon, and pitch'd upon the Weaknesses or Impertinences of the Minister? How oft have you, when you could not blame the Subject-matter, found Fault with the Method, and the Manner of Delivery; and over-look'd that, wherein your Souls were especially concerned.

HAVE not you heard disobediently? Have not you been untractable and unteachable? Have not you heard proudly, not humbly? With hard Hearts, and not with Hearts of Flesh, ready to receive the Impression of the Word, and willing to be moulded and fashioned according to it? When could you say to any of God's Ministers, as *Cornelius to Peter*, *We are all here present, to hear all that is commanded of God*? His Ear and Heart was open to every Command: So was *Job's*, that which I see
not

not, teach Thou me. Have not you had your Ex-ceptions? If Ministers have enjoyn'd you to pray in your Families, perhaps you heard them therein; but if they enjoyn'd from the LORD that you pray in your Closets, and that you examine yourselves, that you fill your Hands with both the Tables, they could not be heard; one Reserve at least: Where-as the right Hearer cries out, LORD, *what wilt Thou have me to do?* I will do any Thing, LORD, actively or passively, to get Hell out of my Soul now, and to keep my Soul out of Hell hereafter.

AFTER hearing the Ambassadors of Heaven, how faulty have you been? In not examining what you have heard by the written Word? The *Bereans* consulted with the Oracles of God, brought the measuring Line of the Sanctuary; but so have not you: How many were there, to whom the Reputation of the Teacher, was sufficient Proof of his Doctrine, receiving all that was stamp'd with his Tongue? Have not you called such and such a Minister, your Father on Earth, in the same Sense in which *Christ* forbids it? Have not you had the Persons of Men in Admiration? No Wonder that Errors have abounded. Men, that through an Over-estimate of the Minister, take all upon Trust, or through Sloth will not examine Doctrines, are like to be deceived.

MAY not *Christ* check you rather than the Disciples, with, *Why do you not Remember?* Have not you heard the Word, and instantly forgot it? Hath not the Word gone in at one Ear, and out at another? Have not you let slip the Word? The Word *παράρρητον* is metaphorical, taken from a Sieve, or leaking Vessel, when the Liquor runs out as fast as it is put in. Have not you hereby been ever learn-
ing

ing, but not come to the Knowledge of the Truth? Your Memories should be like the Ark, wherein the Pot of Manna was kept; but alas! when you heard the Word, then came the wicked One, and caught away that which was sown in your Hearts: And was not the Word, and the Labours of *Christ's* Ministers fallen so low, that you were contented, at least little troubled, thus to be pillaged of this heavenly Treasure.

HAVE you not neglected Meditation upon the Word you have heard? It was one special Way, whereby, in Time of the Law, the clean Beasts were known from the unclean, chewing the Cud. But how few ruminat upon what they have heard and received? They do not, with *Mary*, keep the Sayings, and ponder them in their Hearts. Blessed are they, that bear the Word, and keep it. How few retire into their Closets, and reflect on the Word, for the Nourishment of their Graces, for the Destruction of their Sin? How few consider whether they have met with GOD in a Sermon or no? You should gathered up the Words of *Christ's* Minister, as *Christ* said of the Fragments, so as none should be lost; or as the Gold-smith looks after the very Dust of Gold: But as soon as Conscience was quieted, did you ever think more of it?

How few have gone from the Church to the Closet, there to pour out their Souls for a Blessing upon what they have heard? If when your Sin was discovered, you had gone into your Chambers, and begged Humiliation for it, and Victory over it: And if when neglected Duty was pressed in publick, you had retired, and prayed to GOD to incline your Hearts to keep GOD's Statutes, would it not have been better with you than it now is?

HAVE not you neglected to talk of what you have heard? Have not some, as soon as dismissed from the Sermon, fallen into impertinent Discourses, about News and Trifles; or into worldly Business; and so the Thorns choaked all the Convictions which they received? They consider not, that the Word they heard hath been *the Saviour of Life or of Death*; and that every one that goes from a Sermon, goes off either with God, or the Devil, in his Company.

HAVE not you been *Hearers of the Word only, and not Doers of it*? Have not you so deceived your own selves? Your Ministers have pressed you to secret Prayer, and to Constancy in it; but have not you gone away, and continued in the Neglect of that, wherein the Power of Godliness mainly consists? *Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it*; i. e. that are good Practitioners, that have a Care to regulate Heart and Life, according to what they hear and know: They are rather blessed, than the Mother of *Christ* was, for bringing Him into the World. But alas! let it be for a Lamentation, that so many Professors have been for hearing, but for doing only what they listed. Have you been cast into the Form of the Doctrine which ye have received? Have you *obeyed from the Heart, the Form of Doctrine delivered to you*? Hath your profiting appeared answerable to the many Months and Years you have sat under the Dews of Heaven? What do you believe, love and hope for, more than you did? Have your Hearts stooped more and more to this Scepter of *Christ*? Believe it, if Sin be not more odious, and *Christ* more precious, after you have heard; you have lost your hearing Hours, yea contracted more Guilt to your Souls. That you have not been *changed from Glory to Glory*, is a great Ground of

Sadness

Sadness to the poor Ministers, who fear they have laboured in vain. If you had come down from these Mounts with your Faces shining, if you had received more of G O D upon your Hearts and Lives, you had more credited the Ministry, and put to Silence foolish Men.

7. HAVE not you greatly miscarried, as to consulting with them? Though one great Work of your Ministers was, to deal personally with your Souls; yet how little Weight have you laid upon their Judgment?

HAVE not you more credited the Physician's Opinion of your Bodies, and the Lawyer's about your Estates, than you have your Minister's concerning your Souls?

If you have consulted with your Ministers, have not you delayed going to these Physicians? When the Wound was newly given, and bleeding, you should have repaired to them; but like *Felix*, you have dismissed your Convictions to some other Opportunity. How hath *Satan* befooled many? Persuading them, that there needs not so much ado, that the Minister is too legal, that he will drive to Despair, that (as *Ahab* thought of *Micaiah*) he will not speak one comfortable Word, or that he will blazon the Secrets of their Souls, and so they shall get a Blot by unbosoming themselves?

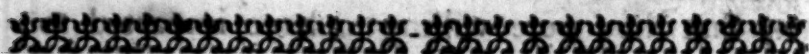
8. How oft have you invited them to your Houses only to feast them, and to shew outwardly your Respect unto them? But have not put the Opportunity to such Uses as *Mary* did *Christ's* Coming to her House? How light, vain, unserious have you been in their Company? It had been more your Wisdom, as well as Duty, to have proposed some ne-

cessary Queries to them, with respect to Eternity: You should have drawn out their Gifts and Graces by proposing such Questions as these :

How, Sir, shall I know the Difference between the assisting and the inhabiting Presence of the Spirit? How shall I know whether the Gospel hath had a saving Efficacy on mine Heart? How shall I know *Satan's* Temptations, from the Suggestions of mine own Heart? How shall I know when *Satan*, and when the Spirit applies Promises? How shall I discern the Motions of the Holy Ghost, from the Impulses of *Satan*, *transforming himself into an Angel of Light*? How shall I know the Teachings of the Spirit from the Teachings of Men? How shall I get Assurance that my Sins are pardoned? How may I obtain Victory over the World? How may I be delivered from Spiritual Sloth? What shall I do, that I may retain the Influences of Ordinances upon my Spirit? How may I be more useful to all my Relations? How may I bridle my Tongue, so as to speak Evil of no Man? How shall I do to work the Works of God? What shall I do to get a trembling Heart under the Word and Works of God? How shall I get a lost Heart, to mourn for my own and others Sins? How shall I know what is my Constitution Sin? How shall I know whether my Courage be from natural Temper, or the Grace of God?

SUCH Questions as these should have been seriously debated with your Ministers; but alas! when you and your Ministers have spent Hours together, have not you contracted Guilt, and made yourselves unfit for secret Duties, nay perhaps have not Time for the Discharge of them?

9. HAVE not you been a Trouble to their Souls? Your Ministers were so affectionately desirous of you, that they were willing to have imparted to you, not the Gospel only, but their own Souls, because ye were dear unto them: And is this your Kindness to your Friends; to break their Hearts, who were glad to spend and be spent for you? How proudly have you carried it towards them? God threatned the *Israelites*, that *the Canaanites should be Pricks in their Eyes, and Thorns in their Sides*: Surely it better became *Canaanites* to be Thorns to the *Israelites*, than for you to be Thorns to your Ministers. How oft have you grieved them, to see your Stoutness and Rebellion against all their Counsels? May not your Ministers say as *David*, *I beheld the Transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy Word?* May not they say, We have seen your Lukewarmness, your Sloth, your Earthliness, and our Souls were troubled? You should have been, like the *Thessalonians*, the *Crown of our Rejoicing*; but you have been Crowns of Thorns, which have pierced not our Heads, but Hearts: You should have refreshed our Bowels, been as Cordials after all our wearisome Labours; but have not you dealt unkindly with us? And the more we have loved you, have not we had the less Love from you? I cannot but think of a Passage of holy Mr. *Shepherd*: “The *Jews* (saith “he) did long for *Christ*, and when He came, “they crucified Him: And you would have Ministers, and you had them, and though you did “not immediately cast them out of their Places, “yet you so wearied their Spirits, and grieved “the Spirit in them, that you made them glad to “bury themselves, and leave their Places.” How little did you obey them that ruled over you, and submitted yourselves, that they might give their Account with Joy, and not with Grief?



C H A P. XXXIII.

Want of Love among the Professors of Religion.

AS touching Brotherly Love (saith the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians) ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another, and indeed you do it: But may not I say to you, *As touching Brotherly Love, you need that I write to you; for you are not taught of God?* "The Fire of Brotherly Love (saith one) "is almost ready to go out, scarce any Spark of "it yet remaining among us; but instead of the "Fire of Love, the Wild-fire of Passion rageth, "and is predominant. Many live as if they had "been born on the Mountains of Bether, the "Mountains of Division; and as if they had been "baptized in the Waters of Meribah, the Wa- "ters of Strife." *Oh! that my Head were Wa- ters, and my Eyes Fountains of Tears, to weep Day and Night for the Want of Love in the Christians of this Generation towards one another.* How common hath it been, to confine our Love to our own Par- ty? We have not loved *all the Saints*. How few *Bucers* are there? How few love all, *in quibus a- liquid Christi vident*, in whom they see any Thing of Christ? Many even hate those that differ from them, though but in Circumstantial: Or they love in Word and in Tongue only, but not in Deed and in Truth. In order to the convincing us of our Guiltiness herein, O that our Consciences may

may be suffered to give in full Answers to the following Queries!

1. *How have we called for Fire from Heaven, when we have thought ourselves dishonoured, in that others have not given such a Reception to our Ways and Practices in Religion, as we expected? Have not we wished those that divided from us in some Circumstances of Worship, even banished? Have not we been glad, when such were put out of all Offices and Places of Profit? Even at this Day, if Men scruple the Lawfulness of some Ceremonies and Gestures in the Service of GOD, they are thought worthy to be cast out of the Church.*

2. *To facilitate, Have not we blotted out the Reputation of their Holiness, and represented Saints as Devils? " It is utterly a Fault
" among you, (said one of our English Wor-
" thies formerly) that the Difference in Judg-
" ment and Practice about Ceremonies, hath
" caused such Strangeness, and Alienation of
" Mind and Affection, between such as truly
" fear GOD, both Ministers and People: We
" are so far from receiving, esteeming, loving
" and maintaining Society one with another,
" notwithstanding this Difference of Judgment
" that we are apt to despise and judge one ano-
" ther for it, and doubt whether there be any
" Truth of Grace in them, that differ from us
" in these Things. Thus do both Sides grossly
" and dangerously err, and sin against their
" Brethren: And when ye sin so against the Bre-
" thren, ye sin against Christ. For the Experi-
" ence of all Times, proveth evidently, that
" there be of both Sides, that fear GOD un-
" feignedly, and in the whole Tenour and
" Course of whose Conversation, the Life and
" Power*

" Power of true Godliness doth appear. And
 " if thou dost not see this (whoever thou art,
 " that art violent on either Side) then art thou
 " certainly thyself most wilfully blind. And I
 " do assure thee (in the Name of the LORD,
 " and by good Warrant out of his Word)
 " that if thou canst not unfeignedly love every
 " one that truly feareth the LORD: If thou
 " canst not bewail and strive against these hard
 " Conceits thou hast been wont to entertain
 " against such, thou canst have no Comfort at
 " all in thine own Estate before GOD."

THUS far he that was in his Time *England's*
 best Preacher. And is the Matter any whit
 amended now? O! how have many spoken all
 Manner of Evil against those that have differ'd
 from them in Circumstances? Have not they
 publickly rail'd one at another? What Names
 have they given one another? Have not we
 been cooled and blunted, and lost our Zeal in
 Matters of greatest Moment, by letting out our
 Zeal against the supposed Errors of our Bre-
 thren?

3. How little have we heeded the Commands
 of GOD against Back-biting? Thou shalt not go
 up and down, as a Tale-bearer among the People.
 Cursed be he that smiteth his Neighbour secretly.
 When the Apostle would set forth the great
 Abominations of the Gentiles, he saith, they
 were *Whisperers, and Back-biters*. Were there
 Love, it would cover all Sins. Whom we love,
 we are wont to commend; but instead of this,
 how do we speak against those that differ from
 us, behind their Backs? Whom we love we
 would have others to love; but by Back-biting,
 we seek to draw off others also from their Du-
 ty.

ty. Herein, how do we serve the *Devil*, who is the great Mediator of Differences? I have oft thought upon the artificial Kind of Back-biting in *Bernard's* Time: "When they slander, they will fetch deep Sighs as if they were much grieved, that others should be so and so guilty; yea they will say, I am exceedingly sorry for such an one, that he should commit so heinous a Crime: When perhaps it was all the while but a base lying Report. Besides they will charge the Tale-bearer with the greatest Secresy, when they will take Liberty to asperse as far as they have Opportunity: they tell the Fault only to a Friend, that will tell no Body of it. But why may not he have forfeited the Gift of keeping Counsel, as well as thyself? Why shouldst thou think that the Hearer will conceal, when thou the Teller canst not? And if thou hast a Mind the Brother's Infirmities should be hid, why dost not thou hide them? If a Man of a different Persuasion live so, that we are forced to commend him, yet we will surely bring in one Calumny or other, that shall blot the Person, and weaken all our Encomiums of him: When we have been forced to speak of others good Actions, how commonly do we lay in a But, something other, to abate the Esteem, that is due: It were well done, if the Ends were right, if from good Principles: And by these Insinuations we restrain others from loving proportionably to the Merit of the Person." At Feasts, if not in more solemn Meetings, what Liberty have we taken to speak against our Brethren? When *Dionysius* feared *Plato* would revile him in the Academy among his Companions: "God forbid (said *Plato*) that there should be such Scarcity of Matter to talk of in the Academy, that they should

" talk

“talk of thee.” Believe it, we had spent our Time better to warm one anothers Hearts with the Love of *Christ*, than to inflame the Spirits of each other against our Brethren.

4. *How easily have we entertained a Report, and credited it against Brethren of different Persuasions?* The Love of Mothers makes them incredulous, as to any Charges laid against their Children; but how seldom have we *driven away a back-biting Tongue with an angry Countenance?* How have we been Tale-bearers; how have we encouraged the Backbiter to open his Pack? How have we received all the Defamations he would bring us? How have we credited Reports upon Here-say, without any Examination? How apt are we to censure and judge before he, which is the Accused, have the Accuser Face to Face. This was the *Romans Law*: I wish it were the *Christians*. Some of you learnt long ago, that it is Injustice to determine without hearing both Parties. Have we loved our Neighbours Name and Credit, as our own? May we not conclude that God will measure to us, as we have to our Brethren? Is it our Wisdom to believe every Word? Would not *David* cut off those whom we embrace? We pretend we are not the first Reporters; but are not we glad the Report is spread? Are not we glad that others good Names are stolen away? Do not we harbour the stolen Goods? When others set our Neighbours Names on Fire, do not we look on, and cry *Aba!* So would we have it? But when do we go to the defamed Neighbour to hear what Apology he can make for himself?

5. *How have we aggravated the Offences of differing Parties beyond their due Proportion?* For fifty have not we set down an hundred? Have not we
reprer

represented that as done against Light, which was done ignorantly? And that done with Deliberation which was done rashly? We have not made a Difference between Sins, and human Frailties; between Sins repented of, and not repented of. How have we been guilty of drawing Consequences from our Adversaries Assertions, and fastening such Opinions on them, as their Souls abhorred? and yet hardly hath one of a thousand retracted these unjust Charges, or humbled himself for this great Iniquity before God, or Man.

6. *DID we begin to stop Breaches betimes?* Did not we suffer our Wounds to be kept open too long? And how few yet are there that endeavour to compose the Jars and Differences that are among us? When there were Bickerings concerning *Moses*, the Law, Circumcision, and Sacrifices? how doth *Paul* beseech *Euodias* and *Syntiche*? How few are like one of the Fathers, who was so much affected with the Divisions of Christians, that he professed himself ready to let out his Heart's-Blood to cement them together? Few entreat for Peace, and those few that do endeavour to hinder the Strife of Brethren, fare no better than *Moses*: He is thought to carry on a Design for a Party that sues for Peace, and desires brotherly and amicable Conferences. Many cry for Peace, and commend it; but they will not be at Cost for it. The cursed Principle is still harboured, that it is a dishonourable Thing to yield first; but that others must begin to stoop to us: Whereas it is God's Honour, that he stooped to us first. We are loth to sue for Peace, and to beg Reconciliation with those, that have been more in the Offence than we. I find little condescending to remove Mistakes and Prejudices. If we have once offered Terms of Peace and Reconciliation, we satisfy ourselves therein; but have not pursued and followed after Peace; we have not used Means
upon

upon Means? This is a clear Evidence of our too much indulging our Discords and Animosities.

7. *HAVE not our Differences come to that Height, that we condemned those Actions of our Brethren, which before they dissented from us we approved and commended? Demetrius of Alexandria liked Origen's making himself an Eunuch, 'till they fell out, and then he wrote against it. Yea, have not we discommended some very good Enterprizes, meerly because they had an Hand in them? Thus some confessed that they had liked many of Luther's Reformations, but that so contemptible a Monk should have the Honour of beginning them. When Men are highly inflamed for some one Thing, they will dislike all the Party doth. Besides, have not we been apt to quarrel with, and mislike whatsoever is done by a whole Society, if we are fallen out with one of that Society?*

8. *How strong are our Memories (even to this Day) to retain all bitter and unchristian Passages of one Party toward another? And if some have buried them, yet are there not some of the Devil's Agents that are raking them out of the Dust, to exasperate Spirits afresh, and widen our Difference?*

9. *How have we suffered Sin to rest upon others? And why? They are not of our Church. Thou shouldst not deal with a Turk as thou hast dealt with Christians; nor with a Beast going astray, as thou hast with thy Brother's Soul. Into what Times are we fallen? That the Jews were kinder to Beasts, than we are to one another: If any go astray, we help them not to return into the right Way: If they perish, let them perish, for any Care we take to reclaim them: If not of us, they must not be regarded. Thou shouldst not hate thy Brother in thy Heart,*

Heart, but reprove him; and not foolishly confine Brotherhood to any particular Congregation, and suffer others to be damn'd, when thou by a faithful Reproof mightest have saved them. Instead of reproving a Christian that differs from us, according to the Rule of *Christ*, for any Miscarriage that we are privy to, have not we let him run on, and then told on the House-Top what was done in secret? O! how have we uncovered that which Humanity should have concealed? Can you talk so of your Friends that are most dear to you?

IO. HAVE not we restrained Prayer for such Christians as have differed from us? Whom we love we pray for: But have not our Differences been so great, that we have excluded one another out of our Prayers? How seldom are we earnest in wrestling with GOD for others, if in some Things divided from us? If we had counted them Enemies, we should have so loved them, as to have prayed for them. O that *Abraham* should pray so vehemently for the Sodomites, and not we for Saints! That *Samuel* should pray for *Saul*, and not we for the LORD's anointed ones! Have not our Differences interrupted not only civil, but religious Communion? Yea, have not we neglected to pray, not only for dissenting Brethren, but for the reconciling of them? Should we not have been encouraged to pray for that which *Christ* so affectionately desires? Will not Petitions be welcome to Heaven for that, which would be the Joy of all the heavenly Host to see effected? Peace on Earth among the Saints would be the Joy of GOD, who is the GOD of Peace; of *Christ*, who is the Prince of Peace. May we not confidently pray for what *Christ* sweat and bled?

11. *How hath the Spirit in us lusted to Envy?* Whom we love, we rejoyce at their Gifts and Enjoyments; but hath not a Spirit of *Cain* prevailed among us? Have not we envied, if others had greater Acceptance with God, than ourselves? Have we rejoiced at the Gifts and Graces of differently-persuaded Brethren, as if they were our own? Or have not we (secretly at least) repined at their being praised? Have not we been afraid that we and our Party have been obscured thereby? Hath not this been evident in our being more backward to speak of their Graces, than of their Imperfections? If we know one of a differing Congregation from ours, that hath a Blemish, our Mouths are full of him; but others Graces, and Heavenly Walks we can pass over in Silence.

12. *HAVE not we refused to help such Christians?* We help what we can those whom we really love: But are not we like Spectators in a Tragedy, who mourn much to see a sad Story acted, but let the Play go on? True Love would express itself by the Hand, as well as Tongue. We read of *the Labour of Love: Love is bountiful*. We pretend to love all our Brethren; but what do we for those that are of different Persuasions? If such an one be in Prison, do we visit him? if naked, do we cloath him? if hungry, do we feed him? If we remember all the LORD's People, that are in Bonds, as if we were bound with them, then do we really love them. Love will suffer any Pains for the Sake of the Beloved; So *Paul* loved all the Saints, that *he was willing to spend and to be spent*, to waste himself for their Good. Which of us hath so spent himself? Love will counsel the Beloved, especially in any Straight; but God knows how little others have been beholden to us even this Way: Possibly we have afterwards told them,
this

this you should have done ; but as we found them in a Ditch, so we left them, and directed them not to a Way of Deliverance. The best Counsel we can give is for the Soul ; but let the divided Parties, yea and others, consider seriously how backward they have been, and are to this Day, to advise to the best Way for Peace, Holiness, and Glory. If we believe such an Undertaking will impair our Neighbour's Name, Estate, or Soul ; yet how slow are we to interpose for the dissuading him from it ? I should hardly think that Parent loves his Child well, that sees him run over a Cliff, and with-holds him not what he can.

13. HAVE not we been so far from helping them, that we have not sympathized with them ? How little have we laid to Heart the Afflictions of any of God's People ? Have not we been unconcerned in their Sufferings in Germany, France ? How seldom have we had any great Conflict for those whose Faces in the Flesh we never saw ?

NOW, when these Things are amongst us, shall we sit still in Silence and Stupidity, and suffer the sweet and soft Fire of Love quite to expire, and the Wild-fire of Passion and Contention to spread and prevail, without moving a Tongue or Hand towards the repressing the one, and reviving the other ? This were enough to make the Dumb to speak ; and therefore may justify my writing, yea my expatiating a little, in venting my Thoughts about this great Evil.

Is it nothing to us, that hereby we are in a special Manner guilty of Disobedience to Jesus Christ ? That all Christians would love one another, was our LORD JESUS's dying Charge, which He frequently inculcated, sweetly insinuated, and

powerfully enforced as a Commandment, not a bare Advice and Counsel: It is a Commandment of *Christ's* own prescribing, *A Commandment I give unto you*: It is a Commandment given, as a special Love Token, in his last Will and Testament: It is a new Commandment, *A new Commandment I give unto you*: It is a most excellent Commandment, in a new Edition, corrected and amended, from the false Glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, and enlarged from his own Example: Before it was only, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*; now it is, *Love one another, as I have loved you*: This new Commandment is not once only given, but again and again, by our dying LORD, to intimate, that as He had one Disciple, who went by the Name of the Disciple whom *Jesus* loved; so He would have a darling Commandment, and that this should be it, *Love one another*: Yea, He calls it, *These Things*, as if *this one Thing* were all Things, and Disobedience to this Commandment were Disobedience to all.

Is it nothing to us, that hereby, as much as in us lies, we make the Prayer of *Christ* of none Effect? *Christ* knew the Evil of Heart-burnings and Divisions, of Wrath and Bitterness against one another, and therefore having preached up Love among his Disciples on Earth, He sets upon praying down Union from his Father in Heaven, and what He insisted most upon in his Sermon, that He enlargeth most upon in his Prayer. *And now I am no more in the World, but these are in the World, and I come to Thee; holy Father, keep through thine own Name, those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are: That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: That the World may believe that Thou hast sent Me: And the Glory which Thou*

Thou gavest Me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one. I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the World may know, that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.

Is it nothing to us, that hereby we throw off *Christ's* distinguishing Livery? By this shall all Men know that you are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another. He doth not say, hereby you shall be my Disciples; but hereby it shall be known: Nor doth He say, hereby shall I know; nor hereby you shall know; but hereby shall others know: Nor doth He say, hereby they shall conjecture; but hereby they shall know, as by a sure and infallible Sign: Nor doth He say, hereby some, a very few, shall know this great Secret; but hereby all Men shall know: Nor doth He say, hereby all Men shall know, that you seem to be my Disciples; but that you are so indeed.

Is it nothing to us, that hereby we make the *Jews* and *Heathens* look on *Christ* as an Impostor? How can they look upon Him otherwise, whilst they see his Coat so full of Seams, yea his Body so full of Rents? Hereby we hinder the World from being convinced that *Christ* is sent of God: *Christ* therefore prayed, that *His* might be one, that the World may know that God sent Him.

Is it nothing to us, that hereby we make, as much as in us lies, the Cross of *Christ* of none Effect, and his Blood to be shed in vain? *Christ* not only preached up Love, and prayed for it, but also paid for it. As He went from preaching up Love on Earth by his Sermon, to pulling it down from Heaven by Prayer; so He went from praying to paying for it, and the Price which He laid down

for it, was his Blood. *For He is our Peace, who hath made both one; having abolished in his Flesh the Enmity, for to make in Himself of twain, one new Man, so making Peace: And that He might reconcile both unto GOD in one Body, by the Cross. Shall Christ die to break down Partition Walls; and will we dare to keep them up? Shall He shed his Blood for Peace; and shall we employ our Wit and Interest to blow the Trumpet to War?*

Is it nothing to us, that hereby we grieve our dear LORD JESUS, and the ever blessed Spirit? May not we easily imagine what a Grief it is to the Head, to see the Members of his Body rent and tearing each other; to see Heirs of the same Hope, whose Names are on his Breast, and whom He presents before his Father together in Heaven, to be thus broken asunder on Earth? Methinks if we had any Love to *Jesus Christ*, we should study to be of one Affection. What *Luther* said once to the Ministers of *Nurenberg* is very considerable: "Suppose
 " (said he) you saw *Jesus Christ* standing bodily in
 " the Midst of you, and thus bespeaking you,
 " What do you, O my dear Children! whom I
 " have redeemed by my Blood, that you might
 " mutually love one another. — There is no Danger
 " in your Difference, but there is much in your
 " Dissention: Do not thus sadden my Spirit? Do
 " not thus spoil the holy Angels of their Joy in
 " Heaven? Am not I more to you than all your
 " Matters of Difference?" How can we expect
 the Company of the Spirit of Grace and Peace,
 whilst such Contentions are amongst us? Were the
 Disciples quarrelling and contending when the Ho-
 ly Ghost fell upon them? No; *They were all with*
one Accord in one Place. Where Men dwell together
in Unity, there the LORD commands the Blessing for
ever. "GOD will not (saith a learned Man) sow
 " the

“ the precious Seed of his Grace and Love among
“ Briars and Thorns, the Enemies of Peace.”

Is it nothing to us, that hereby we make real Saints, the Pillars of the World, weary of staying in the World, to support it any longer? It was the Sight of the Divisions among Christians, that made *Grynæus*, *Melancthon*, *Strigelius*, those precious Souls weary of Earth, and to wish and desire *the Wings of a Dove*, that they might fly away, and be at Rest, as from all other Evils, so from this of Divisions and Dissentions among Brethren. It was the Conjecture of one, that as God's first Judgment against the old World was by Water, against the Heat of Lust; so his last Judgment upon the World that now is, will be by Fire, against the Coldness of Love: If this be true, how do we hasten the great and terrible Day, by our Coldness in Love one towards another?

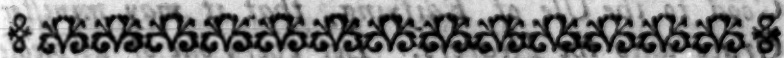
Is it nothing to us, that hereby we gratify the Devil, rejoice the Hearts of the Wicked, and justify their Reproaches? The great Stratagem of Hell is to promote our Differences, and to keep us from Union: The Devil knows that Societies of Christians are immortal, if they do not kill themselves by Division: Divide them and rule them, is a Maxim in Hell, and among the Antichristian Party. Why should we be employed in the Devil's Work? Hath he not Instruments and Tongues enough of his own? O! how doth Antichrist get ground by the Animosities and Divisions among Christians? Certainly what *Tacitus* saith of some in his Time, we may of the *Papists* and all our foreign-Enemies, *Nihil spei, nisi per discordias habent*. All their Hopes of ruining us, arise from our home-bred Discords and Divisions: Were all the Arrows in one Bundle, they would find it next to an Impossibility

bility to break them. Methinks the proud Boasts of the Man of Sin should make us bury all our Discords: Were we but of one Heart before God, and uniting our Prayers, the Mountains would become Plains, yea the seven Hills among the rest. Surely we do not consider where and among whom we are. Are we not in the World, where Satan rules? Shall the Children quarrel in their Enemies Quarters? *Abraham* sues for Peace upon this Consideration, that *we are Brethren, and the Perrizzite dwelt in the Land.* Wicked Men are Spectators of our Discords. The very Heathen have calmed the Mutinies of their Soldiers, by saying, your Enemies yonder behold your mutinous Behaviour. What one said prophetically some Years ago, I cannot but recall: "That unless God did stir up
 " some in the Protestant Churches, and cloath them
 " with a mighty Spirit to accommodate our Differences, the End of them may be, that our Enemies will laugh when we shall weep." Have we not Enemies enough, but must we be cruel to one another? We say the Fire burns the hotter for the cold Weather: Would to God that the Cold Abroad, the Oppositions against us, may intend our Affections the more to God, to his Ways, to his People. And are not the Wicked justified in their Reproaches, whilst they do but write after our Copy?

Lastly. Is it nothing to us, that hereby we hinder the Forgiveness of our own Iniquities? How can we hope we shall be forgiven, if we forgive not one another? How can we look that Scripture in the Face, *If ye forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases?*

I SHALL

I SHALL conclude this Chapter with beseeching, yea conjuring you, in the Words of the Apostle Paul to the *Philippians*: *If there be therefore any Consolation in Christ, if any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels, and Mercies; fulfill ye my Joy, that ye be like minded, having the same Love, being of one Accord, of one Mind.*



C H A P. XXXIV.

The Faults of Church-Members towards those of their particular Congregations.

YOU have professed in your Creed to believe *the Communion of Saints*: You have been admitted to the Privileges of this Communion: You thought it not safe or good for Man to be alone; to live retired from the Society of Christians: You have been inrolled among them; and yet what an unprofitable Hermit hast thou been in *Zion*? Thou art no Way serviceable to the Body. It is a Wonder to me, how Christians can content themselves with the Privileges of God's House, and neglect the mutual Duties that are incumbent on them. The Apostle tells us, that *the meanest Members in the Church are necessary*. But alas! how many are there, who immure themselves within their own Walls; who are so involved in worldly Business, and have so little Care and Zeal for the House of God, that they no Way profit, no Way edify their Brethren? How can you overlook those plain Scriptures? *Let us therefore follow after the Things which make for Peace, and Things wherewith one may edify*

edify another. Wherefore comfort (or exhort) yourselves together, and edify one another. From whom, (i. e. Christ) the whole Body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every Joint supplieth, according to the effectual Working in the Measure of every Part, maketh Increase of the Body, unto the edifying of itself in Love. Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth, but that which is Good to the Use of Edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers. Let every one of us please his Neighbour, for his Good to Edification. Exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day, lest any of you be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin. And let us consider one another, to provoke unto Love, and unto good Works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the Manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the Day approaching. Look not every Man on his own Things, but every Man also on the Things of others. None are excluded: It is every Man's Work. Look diligently, lest any Man fail of the Grace of GOD, lest any Root of Bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. If they do not overlook, how dare they condemn all these Commandments of our LORD Jesus Christ? How can they look upon themselves as no Way concerned in these Duties? It is a Lamentation, that so many Church-Members, through Spiritual Sloth, through a Lothness to displease, through Want of Pity to the Souls of their Brethren, suffer them to perish in Carelessness, Sensuality, Formality; rather than they will labour to quicken, restore, and save them. An Engrosser is hateful to Men: But of how much sorer Punishment shall ye be thought worthy, who engross your Graces, your Gifts, your Experiences, wherewith the Church of Christ might be edified? Every Man is a Steward; but you are Stewards in an especial Manner: You are Stewards of

of the Gifts of the Spirit, which are given to profit withall. How dare ye *hide your Talents in a Napkin*? You have a greater Trust committed to you, than others have: You have Souls committed to your Care; for Church-Members are to care even naturally one for another. What are you afraid you shall have the less Light, the less Grace, the less Comfort from *Christ*, for that others share with you? Know the more useful you are, the more you yourselves will be enriched and supplied; and whilst you are dividing your Loaves, God will act at a wonderful Rate for you: The Bread will multiply: You shall receive, whilst you are disbursing: Your Light and Heat will increase by your disbursing it.

2. How is godly Conference neglected even among Church-Members? What! are you ashamed of your God? Is the speaking of Grace and Glory some Kind of Disparagement to your Tongues? When you come together, precious Time is devoured in Back-biting, in censuring of absent Persons, who are not capable of making their Defence; or else in impertinent Discourses of worldly Matters. Few, like the Disciples in their Journey to *Emaus*, discourse of such Matters, as *Christ* Himself joins with them in, and causeth their Hearts to burn: When do you warm one anothers Hearts, and sit each other to enter into Communion with God in secret? How do many complain of you, that their Hearts are estranged from God by Converse and Intimacies with you, and that they lose their Affections by keeping up Correspondencies with you; and therefore count it their Wisdom to retire into their Closets, rather than mispend precious Hours in foolish Communication? How many weak Christians are there, who are not acquainted with the Wiles of *Satan*, and they sit down pensive and dejected, thinking no Condition like theirs, and
conclude

conclude hereupon that they are none of God's Children, whom (if you were spiritual, pitiful, active, and free to acquaint them with your own Experiences) you might succour under their Temptations, and comfort them with the Comforts wherewith you have been comforted, and ease them by hearkening to their Doubts and Complaints, and shewing them a Way how to deliver their Souls? Were you of a *Christ-like Spirit*, you would *not break these bruised Reeds*; but labour to scatter those Mists, which over-cloud their Souls: You should be Eyes to the Blind; but you are not: You should be of a merciful Spirit to all Souls; more especially to the Souls of all good Men, most especially to the Souls of those to whom you are peculiarly related; but you are not. In the old Law God took Care of *Asses*; if they lay under a Burden, Israel was to help them. Doth God take Care for Beasts; and will not ye for Men, for the Redeemed of the LORD? God requires of you, that you comfort the feeble-minded. The Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withall. Christ expects his own with Increase. They that feared the LORD spake often one to another; (to comfort one another with the Promises of God, made to his People, against the flourishing of the Wicked, and overflowing of Ungodliness) and the LORD hearkened and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before Him. The LORD booked that good Service, He put it upon Record: But though the LORD hearkeneth and heareth, yet He seldom finds us so employed: Our Neglects are sealed up in his Bag. I pray God we may lay it to Heart, repent, and reform. *Bernard's Complaint* may justly be revived: "Not a Word of the Scriptures, nothing of the Salvation of the Soul; but Trifles and Toys, Laughter, and Words as light as the Wind, eat up the Time." Let us give the Ministry their Due; and

and yet not neglect to build up ourselves *in our most holy Faith*. Mutual Duties should be exercised between Christian and Christian: The Apostle is express for it in the Places already quoted: I shall add one more, *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all Wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another*. O! if GOD would be with me so far, as to make me an Instrument to prevail with you, to go and visit one another, and stir up one another, that *knowing the Terrors of the LORD, you may persuade Men!* O! bewail thy Unserviceableness, thy private Spiritedness, thy Want of Love and Bowels to others; especially now, when there is so great an Apostasy. Sure, there is no Time wherein Christian Fellowship is more called for, and wherein it may be more profitable, than at this Time: But alas! how few are there like *Jonathan* and *David*? How few enter into a Brotherly Promise to exhort one another, to call one another to Account, to tell one another their Fears, to know of one another their Growth in Religion?

3. How is *fraternal Correction neglected, or spoiled in the managing*? Some totally neglect reproving their Brethren: They little care for these Things; they are little concerned whether GOD be honoured or dishonoured.

OTHERS delay Admonition. The Flesh is backward to this Self-denying Work, and so the many weighty Circumstances, which should bring the Offender to Repentance, are forgot: The Offender is also hardened in his Sin. He thinks by thy Silence, thou art altogether like him. It is much easier to fetch out a Spot of Ink from a Cloth the Day it is stained, than afterwards. Sin, like a Mole, will quickly bury itself; and the longer let alone, the harder it is to dig it up. The longer a

Disease is let alone, the harder cured. Besides, if you neglect the Reproof this Day or Hour, perhaps by the next he will commit the same Sin again; for either he knows it not to be a Sin, or in Case he knows it, yet every new Act doth strengthen the Habit. It is the Nature of Sin to blind the Mind, to stupify the Conscience, and to harden the Heart. *Exhort therefore one another daily, while it is called To-day, lest any of you be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin.* If the Sinner add Sin to Sin, put that to your Account for neglecting the Ordinance of GOD for his Reducement: If he loseth the Favour of GOD, and neglects hereupon all private Communion with the LORD, put that to thy Account: If at length he becomes impudent in Sin, so that he feels not the Pricks of sharp Admonition, put all this to your Account, because you have delayed to cure, to heal, to save the Soul of your Brother. A timely Reproof might have saved a Soul, *and covered a Multitude of Sins.* Besides, have you Time at your Command, that you will do your Duty at *a more convenient Season?* Mayst not thou die, or the Offender die, and both in Sin; thou in the Sin of Omission, and he in the Sin of Commission; before the Day comes, wherein thou art resolved to tell him of his Fault? Why art thou not trembling with Fear of Blood-guiltiness? Is Soul-Murder no Sin with thee? Or have you the Holy Ghost at Command? Without the Holy Spirit's Assistance your Labour will be vain; you will get a Blot by reproving, the Delinquent will fly in your Face, hate you for telling the Truth, he will add Sin to Sin, and perhaps put you into a Flame too: And must the Holy Ghost dance Attendance on you? If you observe his Hour, you must go presently, whilst the Wound is fresh and bleeding; but if ye neglect his Call, it is a Question whether your Hour will be GOD's.

OTHERS

OTHERS miscarry in reprovng. Some reprove, but not privately; though *Christ* be so exprefs for it, *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone*: Though the Law of Charity binds us to cover our Brother's Nakedness, as much as we can. *Love covereth all Sins*; yet some, *Doeg*-like, backbite their Neighbour, and tell it to every one, save him who should hear it. How few modestly, affectionately, and humbly, in the most private Manner communicate their Fears of Sins, Decays, and Infirmities to the supposed Delinquents? Are not most too forward to divulge their Suspicions to others, whereby the Names of some suffer, Souls lie neglected, Prejudices are promoted, Schism is made in the Body of *Christ*? Though the Law of Wisdom binds us not to use more Means than Needs must, if private Reproofs will reclaim, not to blazon Infirmities; yet many through Pride, Envy, Want of Charity, at least Want of Wit, publish on the House-Top what is done in a Corner. Herein we do, as we hate to be dealt with: Hereby we make the Offender hate us. It will be hard to make him believe thou comest to heal his Soul, if thou hast already wounded his Name. Have not some been for bringing it immediately to the Church? Hereby innumerable Evils ensue; many are grieved, many offended, the Party that is impeached stands on his Guard, pleads for his Sin, extenuates it, or is strengthened in his Sin, by the uncharitable Proceeding of the Brother, who first took Cognizance of the Miscarriage.

OTHER Busy-Bodies would be thought very tender of *Christ's* Honour; they *tytbe Mint and Annise*; they reprove such Things as are disputable, and neglect to reprove where there are just Accusations to lay in. They will be very severe in cen-

furing their Brethren for some controverted Points, and yet let them alone to live in Worldliness, Sensuality, Lukewarmness, Pride, Sloth.

OTHERS are so magisterial in their Reproofs, as if they had forgotten that they were in the Body, as if they had no Corruption in them. They have forgotten the Apostles: *Brethren, if a Man be overtaken in a Fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the Spirit of Meekness.* O! how haughtily do some carry it towards offending Brethren. I wish you would fling the first Stone at yourselves. If you are not guilty of the same Offence, yet you are of others, at least you have the Seed of the same Sin within you. Let them see that it is only Conscience of Duty, that brings you to them, and that it is Love to their Souls puts you upon such displeasing Work. But alas! how few will condescend? The Work is not managed with that Humility it ought, and therefore no Brother is gained.

OTHERS are so light and unserious in this Business, that they spoil all. They do not invoke GOD to accompany them in the Work; they do not cry out, *who is sufficient?* They forget how abortive such Labours have been; they do not set upon it with that Fear and Trembling which they should. Few rebuke with Authority, as having God's Glory, and Mens everlasting Salvation in their Eye: And hence, when they come off from this Work, their Conscience smites them, that they have been no more serious and fervent in a Matter that concerns Life and Death.

FEW continue their Admonitions, and follow them, 'till the Delinquent be brought to Confession and Amendment. We soon tire, and put the ill Names of Dogs and Swine upon our offending Brethren,

Brethren, to excuse our Sloth. We should in *Meekness instruct them, though they oppose themselves*: We should bear with their present Stubbornness and Abuses, and wait if *GOD-peradventure will give them Repentance*: We forget how many Years GOD waited on us, though we were stubborn and refractory.

4. *How few behave themselves Christianly under Reproof?* When Men come to you from the great GOD, to discharge the Duties they owe to your Souls, your Behaviour is such, that none will meddle with such Patients, to dress their Wounds, if the LORD had not charged them with this Commission.

How few receive a Reproof kindly and affectionately? It is a great Mercy to be reproved, *As many as I love, I rebuke*. To sin against Reproof, is aggravated Wickedness. It is an Argument of Hatred, not to reprove, *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart, thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour*. Yet how are they counted turbulent, pragmatistical, rigid and censorious, who will not let them go on in their Sin? Others seem to hearken to the Reprover, and give him verbal Thanks for his plain Dealings; but from that Day their Hearts boil inwardly, and they are filled with Prejudice, which will express itself, when it meets with a fair Opportunity. How few engage some Friend, to be a faithful Monitor to them, to be open-hearted to them, in telling them their Faults? We are so over-run with Self-love, that we think no Stander by can discern so much as we; and we are so unwilling to be censured, that we stand aloof from such a Looking-glass: Few, with *David*, would count it a Kindness, for the Righteous to smite them.

How few amend upon a solemn serious Reproof? How few retire to their Closets, and there upon their Knees bless GOD for emboldening any to tell them of their Sins, and beg Pardon and Strength to reform, and vow by the Grace of GOD to amend whatever is amiss?

5. MOST seek to please themselves and not their Neighbour. A Man would think they never read, *We ought to bear the Infirmities of the Weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one please his Neighbour for his Good to Edification*: Many are Self-willed, they will walk to the utmost of their Liberty, and if others be offended, they little care. But what saith the Apostle? *Knowledge puffeth up, but Charity edifieth.* “ A firm and full Knowledge of
 “ our Liberty in Things indifferent (saith a learned Man) if it be separated from Charity, is apt
 “ to swell the Mind with Pride, and make Men to
 “ despise, doubting and scrupulous Brethren; but
 “ Charity is careful to avoid what may stumble
 “ the Weak, and cause them to fall into Sin, and
 “ therefore judge this rather, that no Man put a
 “ Stumbling-block, or Occasion to fall in his Brother’s
 “ Way. Hast thou Faith, concerning the Lawfulness
 “ of Things indifferent? (for of them the Apostle
 “ speaks) *have it unto thyself before GOD*, make not
 “ a vain Publication thereof, to the grieving, or
 “ stumbling the Weak, who may by thy Example,
 “ even against Conscience, use the same Liberty:
 “ and so through thy Knowledge shall thy
 “ weak Brother perish, i. e. thy using this Liberty
 “ hath a Tendency to destroy him. You may
 “ think this is no great Matter: But the same Apostle
 “ informs you, that you hereby *sin against*
 “ *Christ, you destroy the Work of GOD, the Soul*
 “ *of thy Brother, and no Man on Earth can privilege*
 “ *you from the Wrath of GOD, if you de-*
 “ *stroy*

"srey them with your Meats (with the Use of your Liberty) for whom Christ died; and therefore the Apostle professeth, If Meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no Flesh, while the World standeth, lest I make my Brother to offend." O! that Men were so humble as *Paul*: But alas! All Men seek their own Things: If they are satisfied concerning the Lawfulness of the Things, they look no farther: They little mind the Souls of their Brethren; but are securing themselves some outward Peace, and earthly Advantages. Few naturally care for the Good of others, for the Glory of God, and the Edification of their Brethren.

How are Christians valued and preferred by Externals, rather than by Internals? By outward Honours and Privileges, rather than by their Graces? They who should have most of your Love and Respect, have least. A rich Formalist's Company is more prized, than an humble, mortified, poor Christian's. The Miscarriage that was in the Apostles Days, is descended to this Age, *My Brethren, Have not the Faith of our LORD Jesus Christ, the LORD of Glory, with Respect of Persons.* How are Mens Judgments blinded by external Glory, so that a little in a great, rich, honourable Man, is counted much; and much Grace in a poor man is despised, over-looked, and accounted but little? You do not value Men by their Eminency in Grace, but in Parts and worldly Endowments; as if Gold did set Men off more than Grace. When you should fix your Affections, where you see most Grace, you are taken where you see either most of the World, or most Gifts, Good-breeding, Prudence, or Learning. This having Mens Persons in Admiration, over-reverencing Men for worldly Things, is a great Disparagement

paragement to the Grace of God, as if Riches were more excellent than Religion. *My Brethren! If there come into your Assembly a Man with a Gold Ring, and there cometh also a poor Man in vile Raiment, and you have Respect to him that weareth the gay Cloathing, are not you partial in yourselves? Have not you made a Difference, a groundless Difference, a Difference grounded on carnal Respects, and not upon solid Reason? Are not ye become Judges of evil Thoughts? Have not you made your Judgment of such Persons, according to the Dictate of our own evil Thoughts, and not according to the Rule of the Word? O! how seldom do we value and respect as God doth? Let rich Men be sick, what Ado is there; what running to them; what sending after them; what Endeavours to comfort them? But O! how are the Poor of the Church despised? Little sending to them, though they want Necessaries for their Bodies, in the Time of their Visitation, and their Souls are ready to sink, for Want of a Word in Season. You frequent visiting of some, when under God's Hand, and seldom resorting to others, when in the same Extremity, evidenceth, that you despise the Poor.*

7. *How do they who count themselves Christians, who have had great Acquaintance with Christ and his Ways, who have had a long Experience of Christ's Sweetness, and Satan's Deceits, keep by themselves, with the Neglect of the Lambs, of them who know little of the Mind of God? Whereas all Grace is given to edify the Body of Christ, the Eye is not for itself, but for the blind Members, to lead them in Paths of Righteousness. Your Care should be like God's; his Care is for the least Fly, as well as for the greatest of the Creatures. Christ did not will the Salvation of one more than another; He died*

died equally for all ; all Believers stand alike justified through the Blood of *Christ* ; *Christ* knocks at the poor Man's Door, as well as the rich ; if *Christ* makes any Difference, it is in this, the poor weak Christian hath more Expressions of his Love and Affection, than the strong have, He shews most Pity to the greatest Objects of Pity, to those that are in greatest Want : I wish there were more of this among Christians. It is lamentable to see how little Honour is bestowed upon the weaker Vessels, and how few there are to be found, that *carry the Lambs in their Bosoms* (next their Hearts) and *gently lead those that are with Young*.

8. How little Compassion is shewed to fallen Brethren ? To such as are overtaken with a Fault, yea with many ? We do not labour to pull the Brands, that are half burnt out of the Fire : To save ourselves this Labour, we deem them Cast-aways ; as if there were no Hope of their Restitution and Salvation, we never more look after them. We carry it, as if we held, that Sins committed after Conversion were unpardonable. Art thou a Stranger to thy own Heart ? If not, thou knowest God pitieth thee, though thou fallest ; and it ill becomes thee, who hast been so often holpen out of the deep Ditch, to deny Help to thy Brother that lies there, and perhaps will perish, if none be more merciful than thyself. Are there no solemn Engagements upon thy Soul towards thy Neighbour ? Will not God take thee by the Throat for thy Unmercifulness ? *O thou wicked Servant, I forgave thee all thy Debt, because thou desiredst Me : Shouldst not thou have had Compassion upon thy Fellow-Servant, even as I had Pity on thee ?* Verily, the LORD is wroth with you, and if this be not amended, *He will deliver you to the Tormentors, till you pay all that is due unto Him.* O ! repent of

of this. Multitudes are departed from their former Profession, some of them are become scandalous: Their Sins will lie at your Doors, and their Blood too, if you, thro' Unfaithfulness, or thro' Negligence, or thro' Fainting, endeavour not to restore them. *Ye which are Spiritual, restore such an one.* Are ye all Carnal; are none of you Spiritual? If there be one, here is Work for him, as he will answer the contrary at his Peril.

9. *ON how insufficient Accounts do many withdraw from the Communion of their Brethren?* What, have not they read, or heard, *For sake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the Manner of some is?* It was then dangerous not to separate; but it was more dangerous to separate: Not to separate was dangerous to the outward Man; but to separate was dangerous to the inward Man. It is no Wonder to hear an House is robbed, that stands alone from Neighbours. *Two are better than one.* The Church of God is compared to a City; the weaker Walls of the Houses therein would never endure a blustering Wind; but by their Neighbourhood and Contiguity, they succour each other: But when one stands divided, the next News you may expect to hear of is a Fall. And yet alas! upon every Prejudice and Discontent, if one Brother falls out with another, presently the whole Congregation is threatened with the Loss of the prejudiced Party's Company, and condemned for the Miscarriages of one, and perhaps the supposed Offender hath not the Liberty to know his Offence, in order to his Repentance.



CHAP. XXXV.

Their Miscarriages towards Sinners.

MAY not too much Familiarity with prophane Men be justly charged upon us? I know Man is a sociable Creature; but that will not excuse Christians as to Carelessness in the Choice of their Company. Is it not thus with thee? Is it not all one, whether thou art with a Child of GOD, or with a Child of the Devil? Are not those fit Companions for thee, who slight and rebel against GOD every Day.

O! HOW few believe the Scripture, setting forth the Enmity of wicked Men against GOD's People? The Scripture tells us, *They eat up GOD's People, as Bread*, which implies a strange Inclination in them to devour the Saints, and that they take as great Delight therein, as an hungry Man in eating. Wicked Men will break through all natural, civil, and moral Obligations to ruin GOD's People: The Holy Ghost calls them *implacable Men, fierce, and headstrong*: They are like the hot Oven for Fury, like the Sea for boundless Rage; yet who hath believed this Scripture Report?

DID we believe what Enemies all wicked Men are unto all real Christians, we should not lean to our own Prudence and Discretion to secure us from any Danger by these Men: We should get an Ark to secure us from the Deluge of their Wrath: If any Time we were cast among them
and

and delivered, we should bless God with the three Children, that the fiery Oven did not consume us: We should not wonder, when we hear of any of their barbarous Cruelty; but rather wonder at God's restraining them every Day: We should be suspicious of receiving Hurt, when cast among them: We should shun their Company, as we do Lions and Scorpions: We should never commit any Trust or Secret to their Hands: We should not be light-hearted, whilst in their Society: We should not rely on their Promises any more than on the Promise of the Devil, their Father: We should not count any true Christian secured from Danger, though related to any great wicked Man: We should not twist ourselves with them, by matching ourselves and Children to these Sons and Daughters of *Belial*; neither should we make Choice of Devils to be our Servants.

How few believe what a Quarrel God hath with wicked Men? And that not only with the Loose, but the Formal also? If we did, we should tremble as much to be among them, as to be in an House that is falling: We should endeavour to save ourselves from this untoward Generation. The Apostle would not so have adjured them, so charged, so intreated them, had he not known the Danger of wicked Company. How was the Apostle afraid to be in the Bath with *Cerintus*? Depart (saith God by *Moses*) from the Tents of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, lest you be consumed in all their Sins. Will you put God to work Miracles to save you from your ungodly Company? It is dangerous being in the Road with Thieves, whilst God's Hue and Cry of Vengeance is at their Backs. *A Companion of Fools shall be destroyed.*

How

How few believe their own Experience, what they have suffered by the Company of the Ungodly? It had been better we had gone to the Pest-house, and eat and drank with Persons infected with the Plague, than to accompany with wicked Men: Our Bodies would have been endangered only by the one; but our Souls are by the other. Is not *the Poison of Asps under their Tongues?* Doth not the Devil act them? Doth he not *work effectually in the Children of Disobedience?* Doth he not inform them? Is there any Breath, that is not infectious coming from their Lips? We are insensibly ensnared and defiled by wicked Men, as we are discoloured by lying long under the scorching Sun-Beams. Do not we yet know and feel how *a little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump*, and that one Sinner destroys much Good, and that those that were mingled among the Heathen, learned their Ways? Have not you found after such Company, how your Hearts have been dead, dull, straitned, and unwilling to come into GOD's Presence? And how suddenly after your Refreshments in your Closets, have you lost all your spiritual Fervour, and have instantly cooled by going forth into cold and corrupt Air? When one hath been in private ravished with the Love of GOD, and afterwards meets with Company, which neither doth, nor can speak one Word of such Matters, what a Damp is it to him? Nay is not that true which one saith, that "The People of GOD generally lose more by worldly Men, (that are of a blameless Conversation before Men) than by wicked and prophane Men?" How oft hath Communion with carnal Men been at least an Occasion of deadning your Soul, whilst you have omitted the Duties of Admonition and Reproof, when there was a Call thereto? You hold the Wolf by the Ear, whilst among them: If you re-

prove them, you get a Blot; if not, you wound your own Soul. I will acquaint you with an Observation of mine: When I have seen a Christian fall into an Intimacy with vain Company, I have counted it a sure Mark of a back-sliding Heart.

How few consider, how they harden wicked Men, by an Intimacy with them, whereas Withdrawment from them might be a Means to make them ashamed? Whilst we are chearful with them, we make them believe their Condition is not deplorable, their Danger is not great; whereas, if we thunned them, as we would a bowed Wall, whilst they remain Enemies to the LORD, this might do them Good, for the startling them, and rousing them out of their unhappy Security, and strong Delusions.

Secondly, MAY not Neglect of Discharging the Duties owed to wicked Men, whilst in their Company, be also justly charged upon us? It is an Iron Age, and Mens Hearts are strangely hardened, as to any Pity to the Multitudes who are in a natural and damnable Condition. Methinks you should reflect on the Misery of an unconverted State, whilst you yourselves were so lately in it.

ARE not you convinced, that those with whom you converse daily, have immortal Souls, capable of eternal Life or Misery? Have not they the same common Nature with you? Are there not many civil Bonds, wherein you stand related to them? Doth not their Misery call aloud for your Compassion? Are they not in the Gall of Bitterness, and Bonds of Iniquity? Have they yet any Part or Fellowship in the Pardon of their Sins? The endeavouring to heal the Back-slidings of Christians though a very necessary Work, is not more necessary

cessary than to endeavour to open the Eyes of these poor blind Wretches, and to turn them from the Power of Satan unto God. Would you not make more Haste to cure a Man, that is taken with a swooning Fit, than one that hath a little Swelling in his Finger? I wonder you are no more affected with the Miseries that attend your unregenerate Friends and Acquaintance, who must suddenly be converted, or damned: Methinks you should pity them the more, because they pity not themselves. Methinks the Value that *Christ* hath put upon Souls, by bleeding for them, the Ransom that He hath given for miserable Man, and the unwearied Pains He takes for the Reducement of fallen Man, should teach us to open our Lips, to give some Counsels to them, who are within a Stride of Hell. And yet how are God's people strained towards these forlorn and miserable, undone, condemned Creatures? Though they are under the Curse of the Law, though the Sentence of Death be past against them, and is ready to be executed every Moment; yet you exhort them not to fly from the Wrath to come: If they will perish they may perish, for any Help you afford them.

It grieves me to see how God's People eat up their own and others Time, with unprofitable Words: When they should be speaking some rousing, startling Words of Hell and Damnation of the Necessity of Regeneration, of Eternity, of the foolish Choice Men make in preferring the Pleasures of sin, which are but for a Season before eternal Joys; of the Deceits of the heart, of the Cheats of the Devil, of the Malignity of Sin, of the Curse of the Law, they are talking of this Fashion, or that; they are perhaps censuring one another, but endeavouring nothing for the undeceiving their deluded Companions. You cannot but know what

Advantages you have by your Intimacies with them, to deliver that to them, which they will receive from you, when *Satan* perhaps hath imbittered them against your Ministers. Besides, You are in private with them, and you know by yourselves, how backward you were, to apply the Truths of GOD to your own Souls; but you, as *Nathan* to *David*, may go and say, *Thou art the Man*. You may hear their Pleas for themselves and so have an Opportunity to confute them: And yet how do you neglect all these Opportunities of serving the Necessities of your Friends: You pretend Love unto them; but how can ye see the Blind before your Eyes tumbling into the Lake of Hell, and yet not call on them to return and live? Can you have the Divine Nature within you, and yet be void of Compassions to these miserable Objects, who lie wounded before you, where-ever you go or come. Methinks, when you enter the House of an Unregenerate Man, you should thus meditate, "Now have I an Opportunity to save a Soul from Hell, to make a greater Conquest than *Cæsar* or *Alexander* could boast of: Now may I shew myself a Friend of GOD, by pleading his Right to the Creature: Now may I have an Occasion to make all the Angels of Heaven sing, by saving a lost Soul."

WILL you see these wounded in your Way, and pass them by with an unmerciful Spirit? If you see your Brother have Need of outward Things, (much more of Grace, of Peace with GOD) and shut up your Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of GOD in you? You have some Pity left, when you see a Man fallen under his Horse, or struggling for Life upon the Waters, or in an House on Fire: But alas! here are they that are dropping into the Lake of Fire every Moment,

that

that are dragged up and down, from one Lust to another, by the Devil; and yet you do not pity them. O! Go over to *Macedonia*, and help them. It is a Grief to my Soul, to consider how dull, how useless Christians are, in the Towns and Villages, where Providence hath cast them: If they meet with a Man, they will not so much as ask, whether he be bound for Heaven, or Hell? Whether he knows the Necessity of the New-Birth or no? Whether he hath left Sin, as his greatest Burden? Whether he be willing to accept of *Christ* and Salvation by him, upon his own Terms? Nay, we will not so much as counsel them to read a good Book, or lend them one, if they are poor and unable to buy: We will be at no Cost to save a Soul, that is really of more Worth than a World.

How is it, that you account yourselves Christians, whilst you have no higher Esteem of Souls? Or how can you have any Assurance, that you hate Sin, whilst you labour not to remove it, in whomsoever you find it? If you see Men trifling away their Time, why do you not put them upon redeeming their Time? If you find them Lovers of Pleasures, why do you not invite them, and press them, to look after the true Pleasures, that are at God's Right-hand? If you are the Subjects of *Christ*, how can you endure Treason against Him, and not suppress it? I will never believe, that Man ever mourned for Sins of his own, that doth not for Sins of others; or that he ever hated Sin in himself, that doth not endeavour to ruin it in others Souls, as well as in his own. Be ashamed at your Pretensions, to have Hearts of Flesh, when you have Hearts of Stones, the Hearts of Tygers, the Hearts of Infidels, or else you would pity miserable unconverted Souls. And what, if they de-

fire not your Help? The more need you have to pity them: The less awakened they are out of their cursed Security, the more miserable and dangerous is their State. O! Put on the Bowels of *Jesus Christ*: Carry not yourselves in an high, proud Way, in a lofty, magisterial Way towards these poor Souls: Do not think thou hast discharged thy Duty towards them, by running into a Corner, and back-biting them for Blindness, Hardness, and Contempt of *Christ*; but rather help them to some of your Eye-salve, that they may see. Consider, you have Talents, and account you must for them: and bethink yourselves, whether you may not give a better Account, by endeavouring to reduce these poor Souls, that are straying to Hell, than by letting them alone to damn themselves: Consider sadly what Answer you will make, when *Christ* shall arise and plead with you when *Christ* shall say, *Where is thy Brother?* Will *Cain's* answer serve, *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* Will not *Christ* reply on you; "Did not I come from Heaven on purpose to redeem these perishing Souls? Did not I charge you to exhort one another daily; to do Good to all? Did not I furnish you with Wisdom and Experience, that you might be able and ready to help others? Did not I by Wonders of Providence prolong your Days, that you might be useful? Did not I give you an interest in the Affections of your Neighbours, that you might be as the Dew, and as the Rivers of Waters to the parched Ground; that you might be the Light and Salt of the Earth? And is this your answering all my Designs and Expectations, to rail at the Ungodly and not endeavour to make them better?"

O! Consider how sad your Case will be, if the Blood of thousands of Souls shall be laid at your Doors.

Doors. How do you know, but a few Words of yours might have been as forcible as *Jonah's* to *Nineveh*? Is this to love thy Neighbour as thyself? Do'st thou love thyself, and not regard thy Soul? And canst thou love thy Neighbour, and not endeavour to save him from perishing; to pull the Brand out of the Fire? Have you so learned *Christ*? When our LORD dwelt among us, was He dumb before Sinners, as you are? When He saw the Multitude wanting Bread, did not He deal forth the Bread of Life to them? Did not He prefer this Work before his Meat and Drink? Had not He Compassion for the Ignorant? did not He enlighten poor ignorant Souls; and reprove others? When He went into the Publicans Houses, did not He preach of the Kingdom of GOD unto them? And hath not He given you an Example, that you should do as He hath done? Should not you make it a Matter of Conscience to write after so great, so safe, so glorious a Copy? And withal, what Stumbling-Blocks you have laid in the Ways of Sinners? How many have been offended by our Conversation? And will you send so many to Hell, and not endeavour the Conversion of some? You pretend the Want of Parts? But alas! you want Bowels, you want Affections, you have not a real Sight, and deep Sense of eternal Matters: If you had, you would with Tears in your Eyes beseech your Neighbours to mind their perishing Souls.

HAVE not you cause enough to say to your Neighbours, *Repent, and Pray, if perhaps your Sins may be forgiven.* Go into thy Closet, and there mourn over thy Hard-Heartedness, and Unmercifulness to the Souls of thousands, of whom thou mightest have been an Instrument of Conversion. O could you not have gone and besought your Ministers to lay to Heart the perishing Estate

of

such a Man or Woman? Or might you not have entreated those Souls to consult some Minister about their everlasting State? You have not done what you could: You pretend you cannot convert them; but you will not try whether you can bring them over from Sin to God. You say they are dead in Sins and Trespases, they have Hearts of Stone, as insensible as Stones, as stupid, as impenetrable as Stones: And wast not thou so some Years ago? Hast thou forgot *the Rock, out of which thou wast hewn*? Nay, is there not still too much Stone in thy Heart, that thou canst see God so dishonoured, *Christ* so reproached by those, who are baptized in his Name, and yet not endeavour to pull them out of the Fire. Thou comfortest thyself with the Mercy thou shewest to the Bodies of the Poor that beg at thy Door: These Things thou oughtest to do; but not to lay aside the Spiritual Alms that were due unto them: Thou shouldst have counselled them, admonished them, enlightned them; and now if they perish in their Ignorance, will not their Blood be required at thy Hands? O! tremble at your Blood-guiltiness, The LORD of Heaven and Earth, who says, *All Souls are mine*, hath charged thee, *not to hate thy Brother in thine Heart, not to suffer Sin to rest upon him, but to reprove him*: And yet thou lettest him alone, to perish in his Iniquity.

You are so taken up with yourself, that you little regard what becomes of others to all Eternity. O that you would be prevailed with, to help, counsel and direct others to Heaven! If you have found the Way thither, shew others the Way to Life, the Way to Glory. O! pity them, as *Christ* pitied you; *Christ* hath led you out of the Wilderness of Sin and Trouble: Be you Eyes to the Blind, direct them the right Way to the Land

of

of Promise; tell them what Course you took, declare unto them what GOD hath done for your Souls. Do not you see how industrious *Christ's* Enemies are to diffuse their Poison? Do not *Turks* and *Papists* endeavour to profelyte? Will they not compass Sea and Land to spread their Leaven? Do not all People (besides you) labour to win to their Gods? Do not unclean Persons and Drunkards entice others to the same Wickedness? Shall *Satan's* Vassals be filling Hell, and will you not labour to fill Heaven? Is it not your Honour to bring many Sons and Daughters unto GOD? What will become of the next Generation? How few Servants (if any) will *Christ* have, if others take no more Pains than you do? I fear *Christ* will take up the old Complaint, *The Foxes have Holes, and the Birds have Nests, but the Son of Man will not have where to lay his Head.* How hath a dumb Devil possessed you? O that yet you would commune with your own Hearts, whether you are willing that thousands should go to Hell? And if they answer, No, ask them a second Question, Why do not you use the Means to prevent it; namely, Exhortation, Reproof, and Counsel? You have covered over your Want of Zeal and Tenderness, with a Pretence that you have not the Gifts of Ministers. But have not you been told, that GOD can work by small Means, as well as by great; and that by Things that are not, GOD can bring to nought the Things that are? Is not this like the Pretence of not being eloquent? Do you not know, have you not heard, that the Event depends on the Blessing of the LORD, rather than the Work itself? Cannot GOD bless a few Words in thy Mouth, as He did in *Christ's*, and the Apostles? Canst not thou say, *follow Christ*? And may not presently a *Matthew*, a *Publican*, leave his sinful Courses? Canst thou
not

not say, *Repent and believe, that your Sins may be blotted out?* And may not GOD concur with thee, as He did of old Times? *Is the LORD's Hand shortened, that it cannot help?* And if Israel be not gathered, yet thy Reward is with the LORD: If thine Heart were upright, and could testify that Night and Day thou hast not ceased to warn, to rebuke, and counsel. Certainly your Memories are not so bad, but you must remember the Weight of Sin, and of the Wrath of GOD: You have seen the Wonders of the LORD in the Deeps: You that have escaped to Shore can tell of the Rocks and Shelves, and Storms, which you have been delivered from; and will you let others Shipwreck their Souls, rather than hold out your Light unto them? What shall I say to humble you? There is more Charity in Hell, than you can afford: Blush, blush, and be ashamed to have less Zeal, Love, and Pity, to perishing Souls, than *Dives* in Hell had. He would have had his Brethren saved from the Valley of *Hinnom*.

YOUR Silence will make others think that Sin is not so evil and bitter a Thing, that to lie under GOD's Wrath is not so great a Misery, whilst you are so slow and backward to warn your Friends and Acquaintance that they flee from these, and take Sanctuary in the true City of Refuge, the LORD *Jesus Christ*. O! if you know the Worth of a Soul, pity the Multitude, with whom the Day is not broke, whose forlorn Souls are under a continual Massacre from the bloody Butcher of Hell: Besmear your Souls no longer with the Guilt of their Blood: I shall bless GOD for ever and ever, if this your Negligence of the Souls of those who are without, may be cordially bewailed, and you for the future double your Diligence for their Conversion. Though *Satan* and thy own lazy Heart hath

told

told thee, thou art unfit to set upon this Work, yet better do it meanly, than wholly omit it. What GOD did by illiterate Fishermen, by *Priscilla*, He can do by thee. The LORD pardon thy former Unmercifulness to the Souls of Men. But if thou continue careless and cruel, if thou wilt not by Prayers for them, and Counsels to them, seek their Reducement, as sure as thou art reading, the Voice of thy Brother's Blood is crying against thee from the Earth

BY your Example before (if not since) you believed, you have been the Cause of the Destruction of Souls, of how many who can tell? And, as *Je-roboam made Israel to sin* many Years after he was rotten in his Grave; so your Sin, your wicked Examples may propagate Sin from Generation to Generation, until *Christ* shall come to Judgment. Tremble, tremble at the Thoughts of it, if thou hast not the Heart of a Beast in thee. O! how many Souls are crying in Hell against thee, cursing the Day they knew thee, for that by thee they learned to sin the more, and were strengthened in their Wickedness? And now are not you bound to do your utmost to make Restitution? To labour to save them that are alive? Is it not reasonable that you should labour to win Souls to GOD's, as you have to the Devil's Service? And to have many blessing GOD in Heaven for you, that ever they were in the Company of such an active zealous Christian, who by his Word and Life was instrumental to bring them to the Knowledge of themselves, and of their GOD? And is it not a glorious Work, to hold forth such Light to the World, that they seeing your good Works, may glorify GOD, and you may be Propagators of Zeal and Holiness, from Generation to Generation, 'till *Christ* shall appear to judge the World,

and

and to reward you for all the Services you have done to his Name? O! how welcome shall that Man be to *Christ*, who hath fed, and cloathed, and visited them which He hath purchased with his own precious Blood? *Christ* will own thee for his own Benefactor.



C H A P. XXXVI.

What Use the Professors of Religion should make of this Gospel-Glass.

AND now to all thy former Sins, do not add this great Abomination, that, having had the Glass of the Word, faithfully revealing many of thy Sins to thee, thou shouldst go away and straight forget what manner of Man thou hast been. Let not *Satan* tempt thee to quarrel with the Enterprize; for that the Glass is not broad enough to shew thee all thy Stains and Deformities: Know here are enough, presented to thy View, to lay thee low enough in Hell without Repentance. Perhaps also by thy corrupt Reason thou canst plead for one or two Particulars, or bring it under Debate, whether they are Stains or not? Yet know here are Spots, unquestionable Spots discovered, and such as are not the Spots of God's Children. But wouldst thou improve this (or any other such) Glass for the good of thy Soul? Let God's Honour, and thy precious Soul's everlasting Welfare persuade thee to receive in Meekness and Love the following Counsels.

I. REFLECT on all the Particulars, that thou mayst see what are thine Iniquities. Do not behold only,

only, and so go away: Be not contented with slight Apprehensions; but muse, that the Fire may burn: Consider how oft in the Bill of Attainder, thy Conscience tells thee thou art guilty. O! ponder these Things in thine Heart; recoil upon thyself: Let the LORD hear thee crying out what have I done? How have I provoked the LORD? By Meditation retain the Memory of thy Sins, with all their Aggravations, as much as thou canst: Set past Sins in present View, and possess the Sins of thy Youth, as if they were just now committed: Now track the Abominations of your Lives: Charge this Duty upon thine own Soul, as that which must be done, as thou wilt answer it at thy Peril before God and his Angels. Perhaps hitherto you have forgot your corrupt Lives, and Hearts, as you have your natural Faces forthwith; but let it be so no more for *Christ's* Sake. Consider not only how many of these Sins you have been guilty of; but how Frequently, and for how many Days, or Years, thou hast lived in some of these Abominations, in the same Sin; though perhaps thou knewest it to be a Sin, and hast prayed and resolved against it: And because the Particulars may seem little Sins (though in Truth there is no little Sin; because there is no little God, and Sins have their Aggravations from the Person, who is affronted) yet because it is with Sin, as it is with Stones, you may carry this Stone and that Stone without Trouble; but when many little Stones are heaped together, they become weighty and heavy to bear: Therefore I advise that by serious Meditation you sum them up jointly, 'till your Hearts be broken, and you take up the Language of the Prophet, *My Sins are passed over my Head, they are become too heavy for me to bear*: Reflect not only on thy Pride, and Carelessness, and other particular Miscarriages;

VOL. XXXIII. X but

but put all into one main Sum, that it may stoop thy Heart.

2. AWAY now, and present thyself before the great and holy GOD, whom thou hast provoked by these, by all these great Abominations, and upon thy Knees give Glory to Him by confessing to Him as many of thy Sins, as thou canst remember, with all their aggravating Circumstances: It is the same Advice, that *Jeshua* gave to *Achan*, tell God what thou hast done, add what thou hast left undone, hide it not from Him: Confess to GOD all thy low unworthy Thoughts of Him, all thy Enmity against Him, his Laws, and People. Go, and confess what Envy, what Malice, what Rancour hath lain in thy Heart against thy Neighbour; Confess to the LORD how oft thou hast spoke Evil of Dignities, of the Favourites of Heaven, of the Sons and Daughters of the most High. Many Times thou hast boasted with the Pharisee, what Sins thou hast not been guilty of: Now confess what thou hast been guilty of. I know thou art loth to bring it forth, thou thinkest it will be a Shame to thee; but let me tell thee, it is a Shame that thou art guilty of so much Sin; but it is no Shame to acknowledge it. Only in your Confessions take this Advice. Set your Sins in Order: Enumerate the several Sins you have been guilty of, and though every Thought and Act of Sin is not possible to be cited; yet give Diligence to find out as many as thou canst, and spread them before the LORD.

BRING forth especially that Sin or Sins, which are thy special Sins, whereby thou hast most provoked GOD. *David* gave a Touch at all his Sins in the Beginning of his penitential Psalm; but his Adultery and Blood-guiltiness lay most upon Him, and

and he is never at Ease, 'till he hath confessed them.

BE sure then that, upon a Review of this, or any better Catalogue, thou cry unto thy Heart, as *Samuel to Jesse, Are here all thy Children?* Are here all thy Sins? He that doth not confess a Sin, hath a Mind to commit that Sin again. But certainly it is extreme Folly to impose upon God; for He knows every Thought of thy Heart, yea He knows thy Thoughts before thou knowest them: He knew what Thought *Israel* would have in the Wilderness. I meet with many who will confess such Sins as are most in Fashion, viz. their Dulness under Ordinances, their Formality, their vain Thoughts in Duty, but when did you hear them confessing their Envy at the Gifts, Graces and Privileges of their Brethren.

BRING forth the aggravating Circumstances, and lay them before the LORD. Some confess Sin, but their Confessions are accompanied with strange Excuses and Extenuations, viz. it was done through the Instigation of the Devil, it was done inconsiderately. Such are not for shaming themselves before the LORD; but like Lawyers, plead as well as they can for a bad Cause. Avoid all extenuating Confessions: Lay not thy own Sins upon the Devil, lest thy Account swell even for wronging *Satan*, when indeed thou wast inticed and drawn aside by thy own Lust. Beware of this Folly; for know that extenuating Sin aggravates it before the LORD.

LET thy Confession be ingenuous and free. Sometimes Conscience, like an over-charged Stomach, doth so over-press Men, that they cannot hold, but must out with their Uncleannefs. Thus

it is especially when the Horrors of Death have compassed them round. This Confession of Sin proceeds not from Hatred of Sin, but from Fear of Punishment: They hope if they confess Sin, any Way, they shall obtain Mercy, and this makes many throw up what otherwise they would hide for Ever. I know what you will do upon perusing this sad Catalogue, if God do not sanctify the Book unto you: You will confess Sin, but not your own: You will fall a Censuring the Person or Party you do not love, crying out how guilty are such and such before the LORD? How is GOD dishonoured by them? How doth Religion suffer by them? Yea, but how much hath GOD's Name suffered by thy Lightness, Pride, Sensuality, Backsliding? O! run with Tears, and confess all thine own Sins before GOD. GOD requires it, *Only acknowledge thine Iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy GOD*: And GOD tells you it is a Means to obtain Remission, *If ye confess your Sins He is faithful and just to forgive*. If you had rather be damned then be shamed, thou lovest thy Name better than thy Soul: The LORD be merciful to thee, or else thou wilt lose both, when *Christ* shall come to judge the Earth; for then whatsoever is hid shall be published.

LET your Confession be frequent, yea constant, at least 'till GOD hath done away thy Sin. It may be you may fear your Heart, is so hard, that you shall but sin by a formal dull Confession, or Enumeration of your Sins; but yet do it as well as thou canst, and if thy Heart be hard, go, and complain of it to GOD, and beg Him to take away the Heart of Stone: Let the Sight of this Hardness drive thee the sooner and the oftner to the Throne of Grace, and there lie before the LORD, 'till He cleave the Rock, that the Waters gush out.

3. LABOUR to get your Hearts broken for all your *Rebellions* against God, for all the Impurities of your Hearts and Lives. God hath been exceedingly dishonoured by Falshood, breaking of Vows, Backbiting, Murmuring, neglect of his Worship. Should we then make Mirth? Have not we great Cause, even more Cause than ever People had, to Tremble, not only at the dreadful Judgments of God, that hangs over our Heads, but the Hellish Impieties, that swarm in our Hearts? View not only this imperfect Catalogue, but look from *Genesis* to the *Revelation*, and whatever Filthiness was found in Men or Kingdoms, may be found upon our Skirts: And shall not we refuse to be comforted? Shall not we lie prostrate before God, and weep 'till we can weep no more? Tremble O my Heart! under all these Provocations: And let your Hearts be as the Leaves of a Tree that is shaken by the Whirlwind. What so many hellish Lusts to swarm in thy Heart? What guilty of so many Iniquities against the God of Heaven, and yet thou secure, light, and vain? If I did not know what a Stone I have within, I should wonder all the Day long, how it is possible we can stand under so much Guilt without Shrieks, Cries and Lamentations: I should wonder how you eat, and drink and sleep, how you can laugh or sing, whilst God is so provoked. Can I think that Man lives, who is not moved by the Weight of a Mountain on his Back? Thou hast that which is heavier than Mountains of Lead upon thy Soul, and yet thou hardly feelest it: Thou dost not groan under that, which drew not only Tears of Water, but of Blood, from the Eyes and Veins of *Jesus Christ*. I wonder how you can call God, Father, or *Christ*, Redeemer, whilst you have so little Love to Him, and whilst you were never pricked at the Heart, for all the Injuries that you and others have done Him: Whom you

love, you are troubled for, if he be injured, by yourselves or others: But where is your Trouble for your own or other Mens Sins?

How can you Trade with so much Guilt upon you? You have had your Pleas for your Covetousness, and inordinate Affections to the World, that God bids you *provide for your own*: But what thinkest thou of thy Soul? Is that no Part of your own? O! provide for thy Soul: Thy Soul cannot be safe whilst stained with so many Impurities, which were never mourned over to this Day. O! let Sorrow enter into the very Inwards of thy Heart, and let the insupportable Pressures of Sin sink thy very Soul: Mourn *as the tender Mother for her only Son*: Be in Bitterness, so as thou canst not relish those Things, which thou hast hitherto followed with so much Eagerness: Let the Loathsomeness of thy Sins be continually before thine Eyes: So it was with repenting *David, My Sin is ever before me*. In order to the promoting of this godly Sorrow, I importune thee, with the highest Fervency I can, that thou separate some extraordinary Time to humble thyself, by Fasting and Prayer, that God would give thee Repentance, for thine own and other 'Mens Sins: Perhaps to this Day thou hast never observed one in order to the getting of a broken Heart. O that I could now prevail with thee, for this is the Means, that God hath blest again and again: On such Days God hath softened many an Heart, and cast out the Devil of Security and Hardness, which could not be cast out in ordinary Times of waiting upon God: Let thy main Request on that Day be for a deep Consideration of all thy Sins, with their several Aggravations, and a deep Humiliation for them. I beseech you, if you have any Love to *Christ*, to the Credit of Religion, to your perishing Souls, break

break through all Business and Impediments, and retire, and fall down at the Foot-stool of God, more solemnly, than ever you did : If you are, by the Consideration of your Provocations, humbled in the Dust, be sure to keep Conscience tender; Let not your Convictions die, strike again and again, *smite on the Thigh* again and again, whilst the Iron is Hot : This Fire may be kept alive, by bringing new Fuel to it. Labour exquisitely to afflict your Souls, that you should be so foolish, so vile, as under *Christ's* Livery, to commit so great Abominations. Take Words, and say, " O the Light that I have abused ! O the Means of Grace that I have slighted ! O the little Service that I have done to *Christ*, O the many Dis-services ! " Let these Things cut, and afflict, and humble thy Soul exceedingly from Morning to Evening, and from Evening to Morning, 'till God be pacified towards thee : Beware lest the Motions of a lazy Heart cause thee to desist sooner. A Patient that hath had a long Disease, must continue in the Use of the Prescriptions, 'till it is thoroughly cured.

4. LET your Sorrow be accompanied with Detestation. See all your Sins, and loath them and yourselves too. How much Sin have we confessed, which yet we have secretly hugged in our Hearts ? Labour to have your Hearts rise against your Pride, Hypocrisy, Anger. Hate Sin, not only for Hell, but as Hell ; yea hate yourselves for your Sins ; yea hate yourselves, that you can hate your Sins no more. O that my Hatred of my Lusts might be greater than ever my Love was unto them ! Labour for such Sorrow as *David* had, when he was wounded in his Heart for Sin ; though *Nathan* told him his Sin was forgiven, yet he continued his Sorrow for his great Transgressions : Labour, I beseech you, for Tears of Hatred and Indignation ;
be

be greatly displeased with yourselves, because you have so foolishly and wretchedly dishonoured God, and ventured your eternal Undoing: And if yet thine Eyes be not like the Fish-ponds of *Heshbon* for thy Sins, take Words, and lament before God thine Hardness of Heart, that thou shouldst so grievously offend and provoke so good, so gracious a God, and that notwithstanding thine Heart should remain unbroken.

5. *LET there be added hearty Cries to GOD, for Pardon of all these and all other Abominations.* Who forgives him, that scorns to sue for Remission? Here is your Work in this Day: The Devil and a false Heart will put you upon other Work; but this is your present Work: O! do not leave the Work that GOD sets you about. I know it is your Duty to provide for the Bodies of your Children; but consider the Danger of thy Soul, and give the LORD no Rest 'till He hath blotted out all thy Sin, and thou art assured that He will remember it no more. Comfort not thyself with the Free Grace and Mercy of GOD; whilst thou neglectest to cry to GOD for Grace and Mercy. *He will be sought unto by the House of Israel.* Prize thy Condition, that thou art alive to pray: (thou mightest have been in Hell, there to howl for ever and ever). *Seek the LORD, whilst He may be found:* Seek in Time, before it be too late: And if thou doubttest whether thou hast an Interest in *Christ* and the Promises, because of thy Transgressions; yet remember the gracious Words that fell once from the Mouth of *Christ* to the *Samaritan*: *If thou didst know the Gift of GOD, thou wouldst have asked, and He would have given thee Living Water.* Though thou art unworthy of Children's Bread, and hast deserved to be cast forth among the Dogs; yet thou hast to do with a bountiful

bountiful and merciful LORD; and therefore be not cast down, so as to be discouraged from waiting on the LORD. Rather say, "LORD, I am unworthy to be the Object of thy Mercy, unworthy to live, because Thou didst call, and I did not hear, therefore if I call, Thou mayst justly turn me off in thy Fury: Thou mightest answer me by terrible Things in thy Righteousness: But deal not with me according to my Deservings: O! make me the great Instance of the Power of thy Grace: Let thy Mercy in Pardoning be great, exceeding great, O GOD!"

Do not delay the suing out thy Pardon: Away quickly to the Throne of Grace. There is Danger in Delays, lest your Sense of Sin and Sorrow for it vanish and decay: Blow up the Sparks of Grace, lest they go out and die again: Take the first Advantages of the Grace of GOD. Hast thou an Inclination to humble thyself, to pray, to seek GOD's Face? Improve it quickly, lest the Wrath of GOD break forth upon thee. Do not you know that you have lost the Sense of the Love of GOD? But have you also lost all Sense of GOD's Wrath? Do not you wonder you escape? That you are yet alive? That you are not *free among the Dead*? Will you, dare you go on in your Hardness of Heart? Will you *treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath*? O! GOD forbid. Lay by the World, thy false Friend, thy treacherous *Joab*, that hath smitten to the Earth, with its Kisses, and its Smiles. Here is a Business on which thy Life, the Life of thy precious Soul depends. *Prepare to meet thy GOD*: Wrath is gone out from the LORD, howl, weep, cry, *it may be you shall be hid in the Day of the LORD's Wrath*, it may be your Sins shall be forgiven. Though the Law be a Looking-Glass, to shew you your Spots; yet it cannot cleanse

cleanse you: It is the Gospel alone that pardons. *Away ye wandering Sheep, to the great Shepherd of your Souls:* Great He is in Love to his Flock, He hath laid down his Life for you, He hath purchased you with his own Blood. *Nathan's Parable of the Ewe-Lamb is most true of Christ and his beloved Flock:* He hath nourished you up, and He is willing to lay you in his Bosom. View your great Surety this Day. He came under an Arrest for you, He hath discharged the Debt of all that come by Faith to Him. *He was delivered for our Offences, and was raised again for our Justification.* If there be *Repentance towards God*, let there be *Faith towards the LORD Jesus Christ*. If He hath given you the Fore-runner, you have his Pledge that He will forgive you. Do not say, *GOD heareth not Sinners*, whilst there is a *Fountain opened for Sin and for Uncleanness*. All thy Sins cannot shut it, because it is opened to wash away Sin.

6. *ADD to Supplication, Resolution.* How can you pardon your own Child, that will not promise to do so no more? Let it be the Purpose of your Heart, to neglect Meditation no more, to keep up Bitterness among Christians no more. Enter into an holy Vow against your Sins. Be a thorough Protestant; protest against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. It will be thus if your Hearts be thoroughly humbled for your Sins, and truly inflamed against them. O! say, *what have I to do with Idols any more?* O that you were resolute! Come Life, come Death, come Heaven, come Hell; yet I will change my Course: I will not (through GOD's Grace helping me) do as I have done, omit as I have omitted. If you are not very peremptory to resist Satan and Sin, not to yield unto Temptation, you encourage the Enemy to tempt you. That Woman is in Danger of new Solicitations to Uncleanness, who doth

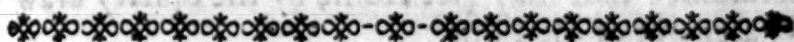
doth not resolutely bid Defiance to the first Temptation. Perhaps you wonder, that after so many Prayers, your Sin still prevails: "But know (saith one) Sin will be your Conqueror, if you be not resolved to be its Enemy." 'Till Resolution against all Sin be wrought in you, GOD will hate all your Prayers for the Pardon of your Sins. He hath a Forehead of Brass, that dares go in before GOD, and say: "O LORD! I beseech Thee to pardon my Worldliness, and Earthly-mindedness; for I am not yet resolved to be Heavenly-minded: O LORD, pardon my Envy, and I trust Thou wilt do it; for I am yet unresolved to part from it: Pardon my Rebellions; for I am not yet resolved whether I shall cease to be a Rebel." Believe it, whilst you do not resolve to hate Sin, it is a clear Sign you have not a Spiritual Knowledge of its Evil; Did you in the Light of the Spirit see Sin in its Nature, and in its bitter Effects; did you see it as utterly inconsistent with all real Happiness, and as the unavoidable Precipice into eternal Damnation, this would make you hate Sin, and be irreconcilable to it.

BUT here I must give this Caution, that you raise not your Resolutions on your own Strength. When you bind yourself by a Vow against such a Sin, take *Christ* into the Bond to be Surety for you, to give you Help and Strength to perform in the Hour of Temptation. And then make Haste, Friends; your Sands run fast, and no Stop is put to them: You may not expect that *the Shadow will go backward ten Degrees*, it may rather go forward: You may hardly have one Hour's Warning before you must remove hence: How suddenly hath GOD cut down the Cedars and the Thistles amongst us? O! in that Day it will be as scalding Lead to thee,
that

that Death and Judgment surprized thee, when thou hadst not so much as resolved to leave thy Rebellions against thy GOD.

7. *SEE what becomes of your Resolutions: How they are made good.* Thou hast purposed not to offend; yea covenanted with thy GOD for better Obedience; yea thou hast sworn to keep his righteous Judgments. But hast thou dealt uprightly with thy GOD? Be not satisfied with Purposes and Resolutions; but look to the Performance. Blessed are ye of GOD, if all the Sins you have been convinced of, and have engaged against, be now put away: If there be no more Pride, Covetousness, Contention, Self-seeking, *returning with seven worse Devils* upon you. I pray GOD we may see some real and permanent Effect of all your Confessions, Sorrows, and Resolves. How would it rejoice my Soul, to see an effectual Alteration in your Faces, and Lives, and Conversations? How shall I bless GOD for ever, if by seeing your Faces in this imperfect Glass, you be transformed into new Obedience? Among all the Sightings in the World, none is sadder than to see Multitudes, that had their Faces Zionwards, now facing about to the Vanities of the Gentiles. O! how glorious, how desirable a Sight will it be to see these returning with Weeping and Supplication?

CHAP.



C H A P. XXXVII.

Motives to make such Use thereof.

AND now to hasten to a Conclusion: O that it would please GOD to make my Words as an Hammer, to break the Rocks! O that somewhat may be hinted, that may through the Blessing of GOD, break your Hearts for, and from Sin! That may promote your Repentance for your own and other Mens Sins! And indeed, unless your Hearts be broken for Sin, they will never be broken from Sin: But the more Bitterness of Spirit you are in for Sin, the more Probability there is you will not return to it. That is certain, either a Man's Sin will make an End of his Mourning, or his Mourning will make an End of his Sin. Yea, if your Hearts be not broken for other Mens Sins, they are not kindly broken for your own Sins. The Truth is, the Sins of others become thine if thou knowest them, and mournest not for them. Consider therefore, by the Help of this Glass, their Sins as well as thine own, to help on thy Brokenness of Heart for and from Sin. *Behold (with David) the Transgressors, and be grieved; because they keep not GOD's Word.* How can you evidence, that you are translated from Death to Life, because you love the Brethren, whilst you are not troubled to see them wounding and damning their Souls? You are grieved to see any Friends of yours in Danger by Sword, by Sicknes, by Fire; but the Souls of your Friends are in the greatest Danger, yet you lament not the Sight of these deplorable

Spectacles. But to lay before you some Considerations, that may (set Home by the Spirit) draw Water out of the Flint.

1. *SHOULD not your Hearts be broken for and from your Sins, seeing so long as you are impenitent, all you do and suffer for GOD is abominable in his Sight? Hardness of Heart is like a Leprosy, that makes all to shun a Man: If you had such a Disease that all would abhor you, would it not humble you to the very Dust? Your Impenitency makes you neither fit Company for GOD, nor his People: You are loathsome in the Sight of both, whilst you are under so much Guilt, and yet insensible of it. A tender broken-hearted Christian is lovely in GOD's, and his Peoples Eyes; but how ugly a Sight is it to see a daring, bold, insensible Sinner, persisting in a Course of Sin, without Repentance? If the Wicked turn from all his Sins that he hath committed, and keep all my Statutes; in his Righteousness that he hath done shall he live. But when the Righteous turneth away from his Righteousness, and committeth Iniquity, and doth according to all the Abominations that the wicked Man doth, shall he live? All his Righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned. And is it nothing to you to lose the Things you have wrought? Is it nothing to suffer, and to suffer so many Things in vain?*

2. *SHOULD not your Hearts be broken for and from your Sins, seeing so long as you are impenitent GOD doth not only loath your Services, but He cannot take any Delight in your Persons; yea, you cannot be restored to his Love and Favour? Without Repentance there is no Remission: Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out. What! have you no Mind to be forgiven? Have you no Will to be at Peace with GOD, and to be restored*

restored to his Love and Favour? Are you content that all these, and innumerable Sins more, should be charged upon your Account? O then! beg of GOD to break your Hearts for and from your Sins. A broken Vessel, a broken Heart, will hold best the Oil of Mercy. *The Sacrifices of GOD are a broken Spirit: A broken and a contrite Heart, O GOD, Thou wilt not despise.*

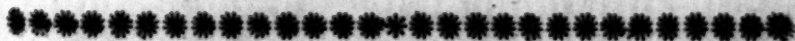
3. *Lastly, SHOULD not your Hearts be broken for and from your Sins, even by what may be seen in this Glass; seeing now GOD gives you not only Time to repent, but an Opportunity of Repentance, and such an one, as if you neglect it, you may never have the like again?* “When Time and the Means are married and lodged together, (saith one) they beget Opportunity.” Now Time and Means meet together, to effect your Repentance. If this Opportunity be lost, you may never have another: And if you should never have any other, your Case is desperate. Opportunities cannot be prayed or wept back again. In GOD’s Opportunity it is an easy Thing to repent; but if this Opportunity should be lost by you, it may be impossible for you to repent, GOD may justly give you up to Judicial Impenitency. It may be GOD doth now by this Treatise speak Home unto thy Soul; now it may be GOD warms thy Heart; now it may be GOD works in thee good Thoughts and Desires; now is thy Day of Grace: But if thou let this Day pass, thou mayst desire to have one of the Drops of that Blood that hath been offered to thee, and yet never have it: Thou mayst desire to feel one Drop of his Spirit, that hath knocked at thy Heart; and yet go without it: Thou mayst entreat for one Dram of that Mercy that hath been offered, and thou hast rejected; but it shall never be granted to thee: GOD may clap that fearful Sentence upon thee.

Y 2

thee, *Now henceforth never grow Fruit more on thee; never Repentance come into thine Heart more.* If now thou wilt not repent and be converted, the LORD may set it down in his Decree, that from this Day forward thou mayst never get Victory over thy Sins; thou mayst ever be mourning for thy Corruptions, but never mourn aright for them; thou mayst blunder about Repentance, but never do the Work. *You shall not mourn, nor weep; but you shall pine away in your Iniquities.* There is many a Soul, for contemning GOD, and not taking Repentance while he may have it, upon whom this Plague of GOD is come, that they are ever repenting, but never able to repent; ever poring upon their Sins, but never able to come out of them; they pray and pray against them, but their Prayers moulder away under them; for they *shall pine away for their Transgressions.* What is the Reason? Why? *Because I would have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged any more.* May not GOD say to thee thus? Because I have given thee Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, Call upon Call, not only outward but inward Calls, Ordinance upon Ordinance, Providence upon Providence, Book upon Book, Motion upon Motion: Because I have used all Means, fair Means and foul Means; I have plainly shewed thee thy Sins, by my Word and Rod, and by this Glass; I have awakened thy Conscience, and stirred up good Desires in thee: *Because I would have cleansed thee, and thou wast not cleansed; thou shalt never be cleansed.* Is not this a fearful Sentence? Alas! thy Heart is very hard, and thy Conscience very much seared, if the reading hereof doth not make thee quake and tremble. What shall I say? *Now is the Axe laid to the Root of the Tree.* Thine Opportunity is now: If thou pass by this Now, thou art gone, for ought I can tell.

tell, for ever. O! neglect not this present Now, lest thou be cut off for ever. Thou art in Danger of being presently cut down, if thou dost not presently repent. *Every Tree which bringeth not forth (at the present) good Fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the Fire.* I shall conclude with the Words of the Apostle: *The Earth, which drinketh in the Rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth Herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, received Blessing from GOD: But that which beareth Thorns and Briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto Cursing, whose End is to be burned.* But, Beloved, we are persuaded better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation, (such a Repentance as cannot be separated from Salvation) *though we thus speak: Yea therefore we thus write.*

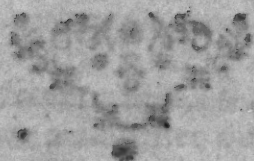
The End of the GOSPEL-GLASS.



tell, for ever. Oh! neglected not this precious New
 test that he cut off for ever. You are in Danger
 of being presently cut down, if thou dost not pre-
 sently repent. Every Year which brings not forth
 (at the present) good Fruit, is barren down, and cut
 into the Fire. I shall conclude with the Words of
 the Apostle: The Earth, which drinketh in the Rain
 that cometh off upon it, and bringeth forth Haba-
 nent for them by whom it is trodden, receiveth Blessing
 from God: But that which beareth Thorns and
 Briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto Cursing, whose
 End it is to be burned. Repent, we are per-
 suaded better Things, and I bring that accu-
 sation, (such a Repentance as cannot be
 separated from Salvation) though we thus speak:
 Yes therefore we thus write.

6 JY 64

The End of the Gospel-Glass.

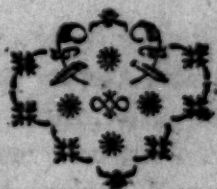


AN
EXTRACT

FROM

Mr. COWLEY'S

ESSAYS.



ESSAYS

A. N.

EXT R A C T

FROM

Mr. COWLEY'S

ESSAYS

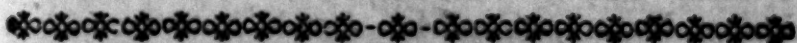


ESSAYS



ESSAYS,

In PROSE and VERSE.



I.

Of SOLITUDE.

NUMQUAM *minus solus, quam cum solus* :
 Never less alone, than when alone; is now
 become a very vulgar Saying. Every Man,
 for these seventeen hundred Years, has had it in his
 Mouth. But it was as at first spoken by the excel-
 lent *Scipio*, who was without Question a most elo-
 quent and witty Person, as well as one of the most
 happy, and the greatest of Mankind. - His Mean-
 ing no doubt was, that he found more Satisfaction
 to his Mind, and more Improvement of it by Soli-
 tude, than by Company; and to shew that he spoke
 not

not this loosely or out of Vanity, after he had made Rome Mistress of almost the whole World, he retir'd himself from it by a voluntary Exile, and at a private House in the Middle of a Wood near *Linternum*, passed the Remainder of his glorious Life no less gloriously. This House *Seneca* went to see so long after with great Veneration, and among other Things describes his Baths to have been of so mean a Structure, that now, says he, the basest of the People would despise them, and cry out, poor *Scipio* understood not how to live. The greatest Part of Men are so far from the Opinion of that noble *Roman*, that if they chance at any Time to be without Company, they are like a becalmed Ship, they never move but by the Wind of other Mens Breath, and have no Oars of their own to steer withall. It is very fantastical and contradictory in human Nature, that Men should love themselves above all the rest of the World, and yet never endure to be with themselves. When they are in Love with a Mistress, all other Persons are importunate and burdensome to them. *Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam Lubens*: They would live and die with her alone.

*Sic ego secretis possem bene vivere silvis,
Qua nulla humano sit via trita pedé.*

*Tu mihi curarum requies, tu nocte vel atra,
Lumen, & in solis tu mihi turba locis.*

With thee for ever I in Woods could rest,
Where never human Foot the Ground has prest,
Thou from all Shades the Darkness canst exclude,
And from a Desert banish Solitude.

AND yet our dear Self is so wearisome to us, that we can scarcely support its Conversation for an Hour together. This is such an odd Temper of Mind

as *Catullus* expresses towards one of his Mistresses, whom we may suppose to have been of a very unfociable Humour.

*Odi & Amo, quanám id faciam ratione requiris?
Nescio, sed fieri sentio, & excrucior.*

I hate, and yet I love thee too;
How can that be? I know not how;
Only that so it is I know,
And feel with Torment that 'tis so.

It is a deplorable Condition this, and drives a Man sometimes to pitiful Shifts, in seeking how to avoid himself.

THE Truth of the Matter is, that neither he who is a Fop in the World, is a fit Man to be alone; nor he who has set his Heart upon the World, tho' he have never so much Understanding; so that Solitude can be well fitted and sit right, but upon a very few Persons. They must have enough Knowledge of the World to see the Vanity of it, and enough Virtue to despise all Vanity; if the Mind be possessed with any Lust or Passion, a Man had better be in a Fair, than in a Wood alone. They may, like petty Thieves, cheat us perhaps, and pick our Pockets in the midst of Company; but, like Robbers, they use to strip and bind, or murder us when they catch us alone. This is but to retreat from Men, and fall into the Hands of Devils. The first Work therefore that a Man must do to make himself capable of the Good of Solitude, is, the very Eradication of all Lusts; for how is it possible for a Man to enjoy himself while his Affections are tied to Things without himself? In the second Place, he must learn to think. Now because the Soul of Man is not by its own Nature or
Observation

Observation furnished with sufficient Materials to work upon; it is necessary for it to have Recourse to Books for fresh Supplies, so Life will grow indigent, and be ready to starve without them; but with them, instead of being wearied with the Length of any Day, we shall only complain of the Shortness of our whole Life.

O Vita, Stulta longa, Sapienti brevis!

O Life, long to the Fool, short to the Wise!

THE first Minister of State has not so much Business in publick, as a wise Man has in private; if the one have little Leisure to be alone, the other has less Leisure to be in Company; the one has but Part of the Affairs of one Nation, the other all the Works of God and Nature under Consideration. There is no Saying shocks me so much as that which I hear very often, That a Man does not know how to pass his Time. It would have been but ill spoken by *Methusalem*, in the nine hundred and sixty ninth Year of his Age. So far it is from us, who have not Time enough to attain to the Perfection of any Part of any Science, to have Cause to complain that we are forced to be idle for Want of Work. But this you will say is only Work for the Learned, others are not capable either of the Employments or Divertisements that arrive from Letters; I know they are not, and therefore cannot recommend such Retirement to a Man totally illiterate.

I.

Hail, old *Patrician* Trees, so great and good!

Hail, ye *Plebeian* Underwood!

Where the poetick Birds rejoice,

And for their quiet Nests, and plenteous Food,

Pay with their grateful Voice.

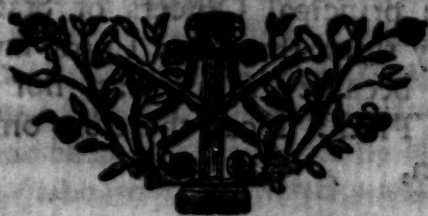
Here

II.

Here Nature does a House for me erect,
 Nature, the fairest Architect,
 Who those fond Artists does despise,
 That can the fair and living Trees neglect,
 Yet the dead Timber prize.

III.

Ah wretched, and too solitary he,
 Who loves not his own Company!
 He'll feel the Weight of't many a Day,
 Unless he call in Sin or Vanity
 To help to bear't away.



If e'er Ambition did my Fancy cheat,
 With any Wish, to mean as to be great,
 Continue, Heaven, still from me to remove
 The humble Blessings of that Life I love.



II.

OF GREATNES S.

SINCE we cannot attain to Greatness, (says the *Sieur de Montagn*) let us have our Revenge by railing at it: This he spoke but in Jest. I believe he desired it no more than I do, and had less Reason, for he enjoyed so plentiful a Fortune in a most excellent Country, as allowed him all the great Conveniences of it, separated from the Incommodities. If I were but in his Condition, I should think it hard Measure, without being convinced of any Crime, to be sequestered from it, and made one of the principal Officers of State. But the Reader may think that what I now say, is of small Authority, because I never was, nor ever shall be put to the Trial: I can therefore only make my Protestation,

If e'er Ambition did my Fancy cheat,
With any Wish, so mean as to be great,
Continue, Heaven, still from me to remove
The humble Blessings of that Life I love.

I know very many Men will despise, and some pity me, for this Humour, as a poor-spirited Fellow; but I'm content, and like *Horace*, thank God for being so. *Dii bene fecerunt, inopis me quodque pusilli sinxerunt animi.* I confess, I love Littleness almost

almost in all Things. A little convenient Estate, a little chearful House, a little Company, and a very little Feast.

How tedious would this be, if we were always bound to be great. I believe there is no King, who would not rather be deposed, than endure every Day of his Reign all the Ceremonies of his Coronation. The mightiest Princes are glad to fly often from these majestick Pleasures (which is, methinks, no small Disparagement to them) as it were for Refuge, to the most contemptible Divertisements, and meanest Recreations of the Vulgar, nay, even of Children. One of the most powerful and fortunate Princes of the World, of late, could find out no Delight so satisfactory, as the keeping of little singing Birds, and hearing of them, and whistling to them. What did the Emperors of the whole World? If ever any Men had the free and full Enjoyment of all human Greatness (nay that would not suffice, for they would be Gods too) they certainly possessed it: And yet one of them, who stiled himself Lord and God of the Earth, could not tell how to pass his whole Day pleasantly, without spending constantly two or three Hours in catching of Flies, and killing them with a Bodkin, as if his Godship had been *Beelzebub*. One of his Predecessors, *Nero*, (who never put any Bounds, nor met with any Stop to his Appetite) could divert himself with no Pastime more agreeable, than to run about the Streets all Night in a Disguise, and abuse the Women, and affront the Men whom he met, and sometimes to beat them, and sometimes to be beaten by them: This was one of his Imperial Pleasures. His chiefest in the Day, was to sing and play upon a Fiddle, in the Habit of a Minstrel, upon the publick Stage; he was prouder of the Garlands that were given to his Divine Voice (as they then call'd

it) in those Kind of Prizes, than all his Forefathers were of their Triumphs over Nations: He did not at his Death complain, that so mighty an Emperor, and the last of the *Cæsarian* Race of Deities, should be brought to so shameful and miserable an End, but only cry'd out, Alas, what Pity it is that so excellent a Musician should perish in this Manner! His Uncle *Claudius* spent half his Time at playing at Dice, that was a main Fruit of his Sovereignty. I omit the Madneses of *Caligula's* Delights, and the execrable Sordidness of those of *Tiberius*. Would one think that *Augustus* himself, the highest and most fortunate of Mankind, a Person endowed too with excellent Parts, should be so hard put to it sometimes for Want of Recreations, as to be found playing at Nuts and bounding Stones, with little *Syrian* and *Moorish* Boys?

Was it for this that his Ambition strove,
To equal *Cæsar* first, and after *Jove*?
Greatness is barren sure of solid Joys;
Her Merchandize (I fear) is all in Toys,
She could not else sure so uncivil be,
To treat his Universal Majesty,
His new-created Deity,
With Nuts, and bounding Stones, and Boys.

BUT we must excuse her for this meager Entertainment, she has not really wherewithal to make such Feasts as we imagine, her Guests must be contented sometimes with but slender Cates, and with the same cold Meats served over and over again, even 'till they become nauseous. When you have pared away all the Vanity, what solid Contentment does there remain, which may not be had with a small Fortune? Not so many Servants or Horses; but a few good ones, which will do all the Business as well: Not so many Dishes at every Meal;

Meal; but at several Meals, which makes them both more healthful, and more pleasant: Not so rich Garments, nor so frequent Changes; but as warm and as comely, and so frequent Change too; as is every Jot as good for the Master, though not for the Taylor: Not such a stately Palace, nor gilt Rooms, or costliest Sorts of Tapestry; but a convenient House, with decent Wainscot. Lastly, (for I omit all other Particulars, and will end with that which I love most in both Conditions) not whole Woods cut in Walks, nor vast Parks, nor Fountain, or Cascade Gardens; but Herb, and Flower, and Fruit Gardens, which are more useful, and the Water every whit as clear and wholesome, as if darted from the Breasts of a Marble Nymph, or the Urn of a River-God. If for all this, you like better the Substance of that former Estate of Life, do but consider the inseparable Accidents of both: Servitude, Disquiet, Danger, and commonly Guilt, inherent in the one; in the other Liberty, Tranquility, Security, and Innocence; and when you have thought upon this, you will confess that to be a Truth, which appeared to you before but a ridiculous Paradox, That a low Fortune is better guarded than an high one. If indeed we look upon the flourishing Head of the Tree, it appears a most beautiful Object,

Sed quantum vertice ad auras,

Æthereas, tantum radice ad Tartara tendit.

As far as up tow'rd's Heav'n the Branches grow,
So far the Root sinks down to Hell below.

ANOTHER horrible Disgrace to Greatness is, that it is for the most Part in pitiful Want and Distress: What a wonderful Thing is this? Unless it degenerate into Avarice, and so cease to be Great-

ness: It falls perpetually into such Necessities, as drive it into Borrowing, Cozenage, or Robbery. *Mancipiiis locuples eget æris Cappadocum Rex.* This is the Case of almost all great Men, as well as the poor King of *Cappadocia*. They abound with Slaves, but are indigent of Money. The ancient *Roman* Emperors, who had the Riches of the whole World for their Revenue, had wherewithal to live (one would have thought) pretty well at Ease, and to have been exempt from the Pressures of Poverty. But yet, with most of them it was much otherwise, and they fell perpetually into such miserable Penury, that they were forced to devour or squeeze most of their Friends or Servants, to cheat with infamous Projects, to ransack and pillage all their Provinces. This Fashion of Imperial Grandeur, is imitated by all inferior and subordinate Sorts of it, as if it were a Point of Honour. They must be cheated of a third Part of their Estates, two other Thirds they must expend in Vanity, so that they remain Debtors for all the necessary Provisions of Life, and have no Way to satisfy those Debts, but out of the Succours and Supplies of Rapine. *As Riches increase (says Solomon) so do they that eat them.* The Master Mouth has no more than before. The Owner, methinks, is like *Ocnus* in the Fable, who is perpetually winding a Rope of Hay, and an Ass at the End perpetually eating it. Out of these Inconveniences arises naturally one more, which is, that no Greatness can be satisfied or contented with itself: Still if it could mount up a little higher, it would be happy; if it could but gain that Point, it would obtain all its Desires: But yet at last, when it is got up to the very Top of the Pic of *Tenariff*, it is in very great Danger of breaking its Neck downwards, but in no Possibility of ascending upwards into the Seat of Tranquility above the Moon. This first ambitious Men in the World, the

the old Giants, are said to have made an heroical Attempt of scaling Heaven in Despite of the Gods, and they cast *Offa* upon *Olympus*, and *Pelion* upon *Offa*; two or three Mountains more they thought would have done the Business, but the Thunder spoiled all the Work, when they were come up to the third Story.

A FAMOUS Person of their Off-spring, the late Giant of our Nation, when from the Condition of a very inconsiderable Captain, he had made himself Lieutenant-General of an Army of little *Titans*, which was his first Mountain, and afterwards General, which was his second, and after that absolute Tyrant of three Kingdoms, which was the third, and almost touched the Heaven which he affected, is believed to have died with Grief and Discontent, because he could not attain to the honest Name of a King, and the old Formality of a Crown, though he had before exceeded the Power. If he could have compassed that, he would perhaps have wanted something else, and pined away for Want of the Title of an Emperor, or a God. The Reason of this is, that Greatness has no Reality in Nature, but is a Creature of the Fancy, a Notion that consists only in Relation and Comparison: It is indeed an Idol; but St. Paul teaches us, *That an Idol is nothing in the World*. There is in Truth no Rising or Meridian of the Sun, but only in respect to several Places: There is no Right or Left, no Upper Hand in Nature; every Thing is little, and every Thing is great, according as it is diversely compared. There may be perhaps some Village in Scotland or Ireland, where I might be a great Man, and in that Case I should be like *Cæsar*; (you would wonder how *Cæsar* and I should be like one another in any Thing) and choose rather to be the first Man of the Village, than second at *Rome*. Our Country

try is called *Great Britany*, in regard only of a
 lesser of the same Name; it would be but a ridicu-
 lous Epithet for it, when we consider it together
 with the Kingdom of *China*. That too, is but a
 pitiful Rood of Ground in Comparison of the whole
 Earth besides; and this whole Globe of Earth,
 which we account so immense a Body, is but one
 Point or Atom in relation to those numberless
 Worlds that are scattered up and down in the infi-
 nite Space of the Sky which we behold.

I.

We look at Men, and wonder at such Odds
 Twixt Things that were the same by Birth;
 We look on Kings as Giants of the Earth,
 These Giants are but Pigmies to the Gods.
 The humblest Bush and proudest Oak,
 Are but of equal Proof against the Thunder-stroke.
 Beauty, and Strength, and Wit, and Wealth, and
 Power,

Have their short flourishing Hour;
 And love to see themselves, and smile,
 And joy in their Pre-eminence a while;
 Ev'n so in the same Land,
 Poor Weeds, rich Corn, gay Flow'rs together stand;
 Alas! Death mows down all with an impartial Hand.

II.

And all you Men, whom Greatness does so please,
 Ye feast (I fear) like *Damocles*:
 If you your Eyes could upwards move,
 (But you (I fear) think nothing is above)
 You would perceive by what a little Thread
 The Sword still hangs over your Head.
 No Tide of Wine could drown your Cares;
 No Mirth or Musick over-noise your Fears.
 The Fear of Death would you so watchful keep
 As not to admit the Image of it, Sleep.

Sleep

III.

Sleep is too proud to wait in Palaces,
 And yet so humble too, as not to scorn
 The meanest Country Cottages;
 His Poppy grows among the Corn.
 The Halcyon Sleep will never build his Nest
 In any stormy Breast.

'Tis not enough that he does find
 Clouds and Darknes in their Mind;
 Darknes but half his Work will do,
 'Tis not enough, he must find Quiet too.





III

*The Danger of an honest Man in much
Company.*

IF twenty thousand naked *Americans* were not able to resist the Assaults of but twenty well arm'd *Spaniards*, I see but little Possibility for one honest Man to defend himself against twenty thousand Knaves, who are all furnish'd *Cap-a-pe* with the defensive Arms of worldly Prudence, and the offensive too of Craft and Malice. He will find no less Odds than this against him, if he have much to do in human Affairs. The only Advice therefore which I can give him, is, to be sure not to venture his Person any longer in the open Campaign, to retreat and entrench himself, to stop up all Avenues, and draw up all Bridges against so numerous an Enemy. The Truth of it is, that a Man in much Business must either make himself a Knave, or else the World will make him a Fool; and if the Injury went no farther than the being laugh'd at, a wise Man would content himself with the Revenge of Retaliation; but the Case is much worse, for these civil Cannibals too, as well as the wild Ones, not only dance about such a taken Stranger, but at last devour him. A sober Man cannot get too soon out of drunken Company, tho' they be ever so kind and merry among themselves, 'tis not unpleasant only, but dangerous to him. Do ye wonder

wonder that a virtuous Man should love to be alone? It is hard for him to be otherwise; he is so, when he is among ten thousand: Neither is the Solitude so uncomfortable to be alone without any other Creature, as it is to be alone, in the Midst of wild Beasts. Man is to Man all kind of Beasts, a fawning Dog, a roaring Lion, a thieving Fox, a robbing Wolf, a dissembling Crocodile, a treacherous Decoy, and a rapacious Vulture. The Civilest, methinks, of all Nations, are those whom we account the most Barbarous. There is some Moderation and good Nature in the *Taupinambaltians*, who eat no Men but their Enemies, whilst we learned and polite and Christian *Europeans*, like so many Pikes and Sharks, prey upon every Thing that we can swallow. It is the great Boast of Eloquence and Philosophy, that they first congregated Men dispers'd, united them into Societies, and built up the Houses and the Walls of Cities. I wish they could unravel all they have woven; that we might have our Woods and our Innocence again, instead of our Castles and Policies. They have assembled many thousands of scatter'd People into one Body; 'tis true, they have done so, they have brought them together into Cities to cozen, and into Armies to murder one another: They found them Hunters and Fishers of wild Creatures, they have made them Hunters and Fishers of their Brethren; they boast to have reduc'd them to a State of Peace, when the Truth is, they have only taught them the Art of War; they have fram'd, I must confess, wholesome Laws for the Restraint of Vice, but they rais'd first that Devil which now they conjure and cannot bind; tho' there were before no Punishments for Wickedness, yet there was less committed because there were no Rewards for it. But the Men who praise Philosophy from this Topick are much deceiv'd; let Oratory answer for

for itself, the Tinkling perhaps of that may unite a Swarm; it never was the Work of Philosophy to assemble Multitudes, but to regulate only, and govern them when they were assembled, to make the best of an Evil, and bring them, as much as is possible, to Unity again. Avarice and Ambition only were the first Builders of Towns and Founders of Empire; they said, *Go to, let us build us a City and a Tower whose Top may reach unto Heaven, and let us make us a Name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the Face of the Earth.* What was the Beginning of Rome, the Metropolis of all the World? What was it but a Concourse of Thieves, and a Sanctuary of Criminals? It was justly nam'd by the Augury of no less than twelve Vultures, and the Founder cemented his Walls with the Blood of his Brother; not unlike to this was the Beginning of the first Town too in the World, and such is the original Sin of most Cities; their actual increase daily with their Age and Growth; the more People, the more Wicked all of them; every one brings in his Part to inflame the Contagion, which becomes at last so universal and so strong, that no Precepts can be sufficient Preservatives; nor any Thing secure our Safety, but Flight from among the Infected. We ought in the Choice of a Situation to regard above all Things the Healthfulness of the Place, and the Healthfulness of it for the Mind rather than for the Body. But suppose (which is hardly to be suppos'd) we had Antidote enough against this Poison; nay, suppose farther, we were always arm'd and provided both against the Assaults of Hostility, and the Mines of Treachery, it will be but an uncomfortable Life to be ever in Alarms. Tho' we were compass'd round with Fire, to defend ourselves from wild Beasts, the Lodging would be unpleasant, because we must always be oblig'd to watch that Fire, and to fear no less the Defects

of

of our Guard, than the Diligence of our Enemy. The Sum of this is, that a virtuous Man is in Danger to be trod upon and destroy'd in the Croud of his Contraries, nay, which is worse, to be chang'd and corrupted by them, and that it is hard to escape both these Inconveniencies, without so much Caution, as will take away the whole Quiet, that is, the Happiness of his Life. Ye see then what he may lose, but, I pray, what can he get there? *Quid Romæ faciam? Mentiri nescio.* What should a Man of Truth and Honesty do at Rome? He can neither understand, nor speak the Language of the Place. A naked Man may swim in the Sea, but it is not the Way to catch Fish there; they are likelier to devour him, than he them, if he bring no Nets, and use no Deceits.

N A Y, if nothing of all this were in the Case, yet the very Sight of Uncleanneſs is loathsome to the Cleanly; the Sight of Folly and Impiety vexatious to the Wise and Pious.

LUCRETIVS, by his Favour, tho' a good Poet; was but an ill-natur'd Man, when he said, It was delightful to see other Men, in a great Storm: And no less ill-natur'd should I think *Democritus*, who laugh'd at all the World, but that he retir'd himself so much out of it, that we may perceive he took no great Pleasure in that kind of Mirth. I have been drawn twice or thrice by Company to go to *Bedlam*, and have seen others very much delighted with the fantastical Extravagancy of so many various Madneſſes, which upon me wrought so contrary an Effect, that I always return'd, not only Melancholy, but even sick with the Sight. My Compassion there was perhaps too tender, for I meet a thousand Madmen abroad, without any Perturbation, tho' to weigh the Matter justly, the total Loss

of Reason is less deplorable than the total Depravation of it. An exact Judge of human Blessings, of Riches, Honours, Beauty, even of Wit itself, should pity the Abuse of them more than the Want.

BRIEFLY, tho' a wise Man could pass never so securely through the great Roads of human Life, yet he will meet perpetually with so many Objects and Occasions of Compassion, Grief, Shame, Anger, Hatred, Indignation, and all Passions but Envy (for he will find nothing to deserve that) that he had better strike into some private Path; nay, go so far, if he could, out of the common Way, *Ut nec facta audiat Pelopidarum*; that he might not so much as hear of the Actions of the Sons of Adam.

Quâ terra patet fera regnat Erynnis,
In facinus jurasse putes.

ONE would think that all Mankind had bound themselves by an Oath to do all the Wickedness they can; that they had *all* (as the Scripture speaks) *sold themselves to Sin*; the Difference only is, that some are a little more crafty (and but a little God knows) in making the Bargain. I thought, when I went first to dwell in the Country, that without Doubt I should have met there with the Simplicity of the old Poetical Golden Age: I thought to have found no Inhabitants there, but such as the Shepherds of Sir Philip Sydney in *Arcadia*; and began to consider with myself, which Way I might recommend no less to Posterity the Happiness and Innocence of the Men of *Chertsea*: But to confess the Truth, I perceiv'd quickly, by infalliable Demonstrations, that I was still in old *England*, and not in *Arcadia*; that, if I could not content myself with any Thing less than exact Fidelity in human

Con-

Conversation, I had almost as good go back and seek for it in the Court, or the Exchange, or *Westminster Hall*. I ask then whither shall we fly, or what shall we do? The World may so come in a Man's Way, that he cannot chuse but salute it, he must take Heed tho' not to go a Whoring after it. If by any lawful Vocation, or just Necessity, Men happen to be marry'd to it, I can only give them *St. Paul's Advice*. *Brethren, - the Time is short, it remains that they that have Wives be as tho' they had none. But I would that all Men were even as I myself.*

IN all Cases they must be sure that they do *Mun-
hum ducere*, and not *Mundo nubere*. They must retain the Superiority and Headship over it: Happy are they who can get out of the Sight of this deceitful Beauty, that they may not be led so much as into Temptation; who have not only quitted the Metropolis, but can abstain from ever seeing the next Market Town of their Country.





IV.

The Shortness of Life, and Uncertainty of Riches.

IF you should see a Man who were to cross from *Dover* to *Calais*, run about very busy and solicitous, and trouble himself many Weeks before in making Provisions for his Voyage, would you commend him for a cautious and discreet Person, or laugh at him for a timorous and impertinent Coxcomb? A Man who is excessive in his Pains and Diligence, and who consumes the greatest Part of his Time in furnishing the Remainder with all Conveniencies and even Superfluities, is to Angels and wise Men no less ridiculous; he does as as little consider the Shortness of his Passage, that he might proportion his Cares accordingly. It is, alas, so narrow a Streight betwixt the Womb and the Grave, that it might be call'd the *Pas de Vie*, as well as that the *Pas de Calais*. We are all *ἑφ' ἡμέρας* (as *Pindar* calls us) Creatures of a Day, and therefore our Saviour bounds our Desires to that little Space; as if it were very probable that every Day should be our last, we are taught to demand even Bread for no longer a Time. The Sun ought not to set upon our Covetousness no more than upon our Anger, but as to Almighty God a thousand Years are as one Day, so in direct Opposition, one Day to a covetous Man is as a thousand Years; *Tam brevi fortis jaculatur ævo multa,*
so

So far he shoots beyond his Butt: One would think he were of the Opinion of the *Millenaries*, and hop'd for so long a Reign upon Earth. The Patriarchs before the Flood, who enjoy'd almost such a Life, made, we are sure, less Stores for the maintaining of it; they who liv'd nine hundred Years scarcely provided for a few Days; we who live but a few Days, provide at least for nine hundred Years; what a strange Alteration is this of human Life and Manners? And yet we see an Imitation of it in every Man's particular Experience, for we begin not the Cares of Life 'till it be half spent, and still increase them as that decreases. What is there among the Actions of Beasts so illogical and repugnant to Reason? When they do any Thing which seems to proceed from that which we call Reason, we disdain to allow them that Perfection, and attribute it only to a natural Instinct? If we could but learn to number our Days (as we are taught to pray that we might) we should adjust much better our other Accounts; but whilst we never consider an End of them, it is no Wonder if our Cares for them be without End too. *Horace* advises very wisely, and in excellent good Words, *Spatio brevi spem longam refoces*, From a short Life cut off all Hopes that grow too long. They must be prun'd away like Suckers that choak the Mother-Plant, and hinder it from bearing Fruit. And in another Place to the same Sense, *Vitæ summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam*; which *Seneca* does not mend when he says, *Oh quanta dementia est spes longas inchoantium!* But he gives an Example there of an Acquaintance of his named *Senecio*, who from a very mean Beginning by great Industry in turning about of Money through all Ways of Gain, had attain'd to extraordinary Riches, but died on a sudden, after having supped merily, *In ipso actu bene cedentium rerum, in ipso pro-*
A a 3
currentis

currentis fortunæ impetu, In the full Course of his good Fortune, when she had a high Tide, a stiff Gale, and all her Sails on; upon which Occasion he cries, out of *Virgil*,

Infere nunc Melibææ pyros, pone ordine vites,

Go *Melibæus*, now,

Go graff thy Orchards and thy Vineyards plant;
Behold the Fruit!

For this *Senecio* I have the less Compassion, because he was taken, as we say, in *ipso facto*, still labouring in the Work of Avarice; but the poor rich Man in *St. Luke* seems to have been satisfied at last, he confesses he had enough for many Years, He bids his Soul take its Ease, and yet for all that *GOD* says to him, *Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee*, and the Things thou hast laid up, whom shall they belong to? Where shall we find the Causes of this bitter Reproach and terrible Judgment? We may find, I think, two, and *GOD* perhaps saw more. First, That he did not intend true Rest to his Soul, but only to change the Employments of it from Avarice to Luxury, his Design is to eat, and to drink, and to be merry. Secondly, That he went on too long before he thought of resting; the Fulness of his old Barns had not sufficed him, he would *•y* till he was forced to build new ones; and *GOD* meted out to him the same Measure: Since he would have more Riches than his Life could contain, *GOD* destroyed his Life, and gave the Fruits of it to another.

Thus *GOD* takes away sometimes the Man from his Riches, and no less frequently Riches from the Man: What Hope can there be of
such

such a Marriage, where both Parties are so fickle
and uncertain? By what Bonds can such a Couple
be kept long together?

I.

Why dost thou heap up Wealth, which thou must
quit,

Or, what is worse, be left by it?

Why dost thou load thyself, when thou'rt to fly,

Oh! Man ordain'd to die?

II.

Why dost thou build up stately Rooms on high,

Thou who art under Ground to lie?

Thou sow'st and plantest, but no Fruit must see,

For Death, alas! is sowing thee.

III.

Ev'n aged Men, as if they truly were

Children again, for Age prepare;

Provisions for long Travel they design,

In the last Point of their short Line.

IV.

Wisely the Ant against poor Winter hoards

The Stock which Summer's Wealth affords;

In Grasshoppers, that must in Autumn die,

How vain were such an Industry?

V.

Of Pow'r and Honour the deceitful Light

Might half excuse our cheated Sight,

If it of Life the whole small Time would stay,

And be our Sun-shine all the Day,

VI.

Like Lightning that, begot but in a Cloud,

(Tho' shining bright, and speaking loud)

Whilst

Whilst it begins, concludes its violent Race,
And where it gilds, it wounds the Place.

VII.

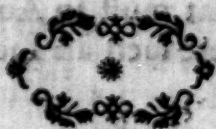
Oh Scene of Fortune, which dost fair appear,
Only to Men that stand not near !
Proud Poverty, that Tinsel Brav'ry wears !
And, like a Rainbow, painted Tears !

VIII.

Be prudent, and the Shore in Prospect keep,
In a weak Boat trust not the Deep.
Plac'd beneath Envy, above Envy's rise ;
Pity great Men, great Things despise.

IX.

The wise Example of the Heavenly Lark,
Thy Fellow-Poet, Cowley, mark,
Above the Clouds let thy proud Musick sound,
Thy humble Nest build on the Ground.



The



V.

The Danger of PROCRASTINATION.

A Letter to Mr. S.—. L.

I AM glad that you approve and applaud my Design, of withdrawing myself from all Tumult and Business of the World; and consecrating the little Rest of my Time to those Studies to which Nature had inclined me, and from which Fortune has so long detained me. But nevertheless (you say, which, *But*, is, *Ærugo mæra*, a Rust which spoils the good Metal it grows upon. But you say) you would advise me not to precipitate that Resolution, but to stay a while longer with Patience and Complaisance, 'till I had gotten such an Estate as might afford me (according to the Saying of that Person whom you and I love very much, and would believe as soon as another Man) *Cum dignitate otium*. This were excellent Advice to *Joshua*, who could bid the Sun stay too. But there is no fooling with Life, when it is once turned beyond Forty. The seeking of a Fortune then, is but a desperate After-Game, it is an hundred to one if a Man sling two Sixes, and recover all; especially if his Hand be no luckier than mine. There is some Help for all the Defects of Fortune, for if a Man cannot attain to the Length of his Wishes, he may have his Remedy by cutting of them

them shorter. *Epicurus* writes a Letter to *Idome-neas* (who was then a very powerful, wealthy, and (it seems) bountiful Person) to recommend to him who had made so many Men rich, one *Pythocles*, a Friend of his, who he desired might be made a rich Man too: But I entreat you that you would not do it just the same Way as you have done to many less deserving Persons, but in the most genteel Manner of obliging him, which is not to add any Thing to his Estate, but to take something from his Desires. The Sum of this is, That for the uncertain Hopes of some Conveniences, we ought not to defer the Execution of a Work that is necessary, especially when the Use of those Things which we would stay for, may otherwise be supplied, but the Loss of Time never recover'd: Nay, farther yet, though we were sure to obtain all that we had a Mind to, though we were sure of getting never so much by continuing the Game, yet when the Light of Life is so near going out, and ought to be so precious, *Le jeu ne vaut pas la Chandelle*, The Play is not worth the Expence of the Candle: After having been long tost in a Tempest, if our Masts be standing, and we have still Sail and Tackling enough to carry us to our Port, it is no Matter for Streamers and Top-Gallants; *Utere velis, Totos pande sinus*. A Gentleman in our late Civil Wars, when his Quarters were beaten up by the Enemy, was taken Prisoner, and lost his Life afterwards, only by staying to put on a Band, and adjust his Periwig: He would escape like a Person of Quality, or not at all, and died the noble Martyr of Ceremony and Gentility. I think your Counsel of *Festina lente* is as ill to a Man who is flying from the World, as it would have been to that unfortunate well-bred Gentleman, who was so cautious.

as not to fly undecently from his Enemies; and therefore I prefer *Horace's* Advice before yours.

———— *Sapere Aude, Incipe* ————

BEGIN; the getting out of Doors is the greatest Part of the Journey. *Varro* teaches us that *Latin* Proverb, *Portam itineri longissimam esse*: But to return to *Horace*,

———— *Sapere aude,*

*Incipe, vivendi qui recte prorogat horam,
Rusticus expectat dum defluat Annis, ac ille
Labitur, & labetur in omne volubilis ævum.*

Begin, be bold, and venture to be wise;
He who defers this Work from Day to Day,
Does on a River's Bank expecting stay,
'Till the whole Stream, which stopp'd him,
Should he gone,
That runs, and as it runs, for ever will run on.

CÆSAR (the Man of Expedition above all others) was so far from this Folly, that whensoever in a Journey he was to cross any River, he never went one Foot out of his Way for a Bridge, or a Ford, or a Ferry, but flung himself into it immediately, and swam over; and this is the Course we ought to imitate, if we meet with any Stops in our Way to Happiness. Stay 'till the Waters are low, stay 'till some Boats come by to transport you, stay 'till a Bridge be built for you; you had as good stay 'till the River be quite pass'd. *Persius* (who, you use to say, you did not know whether he be a good Poet or no, because you cannot understand him, and whom therefore, I say, I know to be not a good Poet) has an odd
Ex-

Expression of these Procrastinators, which, methinks, is full of Fancy.

*Jam Cras Hesternum consumpsimus, Ecce aliud Cras
Egerit hos annos.*

Perf. Satyr. 5.

Our Yesterday's To-morrow now is gone,
And still a new To-morrow does come on,
We by To-morrows draw up all our Store,
'Till the exhausted Well can yield no more.

Mart. Lib. 5. Epigr. 59.

To-morrow you will live, you always cry;
In what far Country does this Morrow lie,
That 'tis so mighty long e'er it arrive?
Beyond the *Indies* does this Morrow live?
'Tis so far fetch'd this Morrow, that I fear
'Twill be both very old, and very dear.
To-morrow I will live, the Fool does say;
To-day itself's too late, the Wise liv'd Yesterday.

Mart. Lib. 2. Epigr. 90.

Wonder not, Sir, (you who instruct the Town
In the true Wisdom of the sacred Gown)
That I make Haste to live, and cannot hold
Patiently out, 'till I grow rich and old.
Life for Delays and Doubts no Time does give,
None ever yet made Haste enough to live.
Let him defer it, whose preposterous Care
Omits himself, and reaches to his Heir:
Who does his Father's bounded Stores despise,
And whom his own too never can suffice.
My humble Thoughts no glittering Roofs re-
quire, [Fire.
Or Rooms that shine with ought but constant
I will

I will content the Av'rice of my Sight,
 With the fair Gildings of reflected Light:
 Pleasures abroad, the Sport of Nature yields,
 Her living Fountains, and her smiling Fields;
 And then at Home, what Pleasure is't to see
 A little cleanly chearful Family?
 Which if a chaste Wife crown, no less in her,
 Than Fortune, I the Golden Mean prefer.
 Too noble, nor too wise, she should not be,
 No, nor too rich, too fair, too fond of me.
 Thus let my Life slide silently away,
 With Sleep all Night, and Quiet all the Day.



Epitaphium Vivi Auctoris.

HIC, O Viator, sub Lare parvulo,
 Couleius Hic est Conditus, Hic Jacet
 Defunctus humani Laboris
 Sorte, supervacuaque vita,
 Non Indecora pauperie Nitens,
 Et non inerti nobilis otio,
 Vanoque dilectis popello
 Divitiis animosus hostis.
 Possis ut illum dicere mortuum,
 En Terra jam nunc Quantula sufficit?
 Exempta sit Curis, viator,
 Terra sit illa Levis, precare.
 Hic sparge Flores, sparge breves Rosas,
 Nam Vita gaudet Mortua Floribus,
 Herbisque Odoratis Corona
 Vatis adhuc Cinerem Calentem.



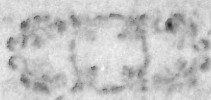
I will content the Advice of my Sight,
 With the fair Gildings of reflected light:
 Pleasures abroad, the Sport of Nature yields;
 Her living Fountains, and her smiling fields:
 And then at Home, what Pleasure is't to see
 A little cleanly cheerful Family?
 Which is a chaste Wife crown'd, no less in bed,
 Than Fortune, I the Golden Mean prefer.
 Too noble, nor too wild, she should not be
 No, nor too rich, too fair, too fond of me.
 Thus let my Life slide silently away,
 With Sleep all Night, and Quiet all the Day.



Epitaphium Vivi Auctoris.

HIC OBIT
 COLLEGIUM HIC OBIT HIC OBIT
 64 Yr 6 Mo

Defunctus humani Laboris
 In hoc mundo perierit
 At non inerti nobilis ordo
 Venerat illustri sepulchro
 Divitiis amplexibus hostis.
 Postquam in hoc seculum
 In hoc seculum non tantum
 In hoc seculum non tantum
 In hoc seculum non tantum
 In hoc seculum non tantum
 In hoc seculum non tantum
 In hoc seculum non tantum
 In hoc seculum non tantum





CONTENTS



THIRTY-THIRD VOLUME.

The Want of Self-Deceit in Professors of Religion



Their Miscarriages about their Spiritual Troubles

A GOSPEL-GLASS: Or, a CALL from HEAVEN to Sinners and Saints, by Repentance and Reformation, to prepare to meet GOD.

THE Preface — Page 5

CHAP. I.

The Regardlessness of Professors of Religion of their own Souls — 9
Few consider the Worth of their Souls — 10
Their Thoughts laid out upon the Body — ib.
The little Care they have of others Souls — 13

The CONTENTS.

Page

C H A P. II.

Their Want of saving Conviction and Com-	14
punction — — — —	
Many never convinced of original Sin —	15
Few see the Corruption of their own Mind	17
Few are convinced of the Corruption of their	
Will — — — —	18
Of their Affections — — — —	19
Or of their Memory — — — —	ib.
Few have been convinced that Sin is the	
greatest Evil — — — —	ib.
Few are sensible that the Wrath of God	
abideth on them — — — —	21
Few are sensible that the Devil works in	
them as in his Work-house — — — —	22

C H A P. III.

The Want of Self-Despair in Professors of	
Religion — — — —	23

C H A P. IV.

Their Miscarriages about their Spiritual Trou-	
bles — — — —	25
There are few that justify God — — — —	26
Few Spiritual Persons, when under Troubles,	
are willingly under them — — — —	27
Many mourn for Sins, yet live in the conti-	
nued Practice of them — — — —	28
Few mourn for their slighting of <i>Christ</i> — — — —	ib.

C H A P. V.

Their Ignorance of <i>Christ</i> — — — —	29
Many close with <i>Christ</i> for their own Ends	30
Many make base Capitulations with <i>Christ</i> — — — —	32

C H A P.

The CONTENTS.

Page

— C H A P. VI.

Many delay to close with <i>Christ</i> —	34
Some from their Love to their Lusts —	37
Others, in Imitation of the old <i>Adam</i> , believe the Devil before God —	38
Others thro' the Pride of their Hearts will not come to <i>Christ</i> —	39
Others stay off from <i>Christ</i> thro' Ignorance and Weakness —	ib.
Others thro' some Kind of seeming Modesty and Tenderness delay coming to <i>Christ</i> —	40

C H A P. VII.

Their taking <i>Christ</i> partially —	42
Without conjugal Affections —	43
<i>Christ</i> the only Good of our Souls —	44
Few Christians consider the Cost they may be at in closing with <i>Christ</i> —	45

C H A P. VIII.

Their shuffling together false Signs of closing with <i>Christ</i> —	47
--	----

C H A P. IX.

The Ungodliness of many Professors of Religion —	50
Their Ignorance of God —	51
Their Errors —	52

C H A P. X.

Their Want of Love to God —	54
-----------------------------	----

C H A P. XI.

Their evil Surmises of God —	62
They miscall God's Tokens of Love —	ib.
God's Providences ill resented —	63

The CONTENTS.

	Page
Some draw sad Conclusions from God's providential Dispensations —	64
Some question the Love of God towards them —	65

C H A P. XII.

Their Unthankfulness —	66
By not giving God the Glory of all —	68
By being unaffected with the Goodness of God towards them —	ib.
By not returning Thanks for Deliverances —	69
By neglecting to keep in Memory the Mercies they have received —	ib.
By not calling on others to join with them in blessing God —	ib.

C H A P. XIII.

Their Neglect of Prayer, especially of secret Prayer —	76
Not Praying, an high Contempt of God —	77
Few make Conscience of Closet-Prayer —	79
Ejaculatory Prayer should not hinder solemn Praying —	80
Few observe the fittest Time for Prayer —	82

C H A P. XIV.

The Miscarriages of those who do pray, about Prayer —	84
Many fail before they enter upon Prayer by Neglect of Meditation —	85
By not considering God's Almightyness —	ib.
By not meditating on his Bounty and Faithfulness —	74
By not meditating of the Way by whom we must come to God —	ib.
By not meditating on our Sins —	ib.

The CONTENTS.

	Page
By not meditating on the Mercies we have received — — —	87
By not stirring up our Graces before we enter upon the Duty — — —	88
Many fail when entered upon this Duty	
In their Invocations — — —	89
In their Confessions of Sin — — —	ib.
In their Petitions — — —	90
In their Thanksgivings. — — —	91

CHAP. XV.

Their slighting the written Word of God, especially in not reading and meditating on it as they ought — — —	95
They are willingly ignorant of Scripture Discoveries — — —	96
Many read the Bible too seldom — — —	97
They read unbelievingly, and for wrong Ends — — —	98

CHAP. XVI.

The Miscarriages of Professors of Religion about the Promises — — —	102
They little believe the Truth of them — — —	103
Their low Esteem of them — — —	ib.
They little bless the LORD for the Jewels wrapt up in the Promises — — —	104
They eye the Promises, without eyeing Christ — — —	ib.
They wait not patiently till the Good which is in the Promises be given — — —	105
Many abuse, rather than apply Promises — — —	106
Some are too curious in applying of Promises — — —	108
They little examine the Fruits of God's Promises in their own Souls — — —	109

CHAP. XVII.

Their Abuse of Providence — — —	110
They seldom observe it — — —	110
They	

The CONTENTS.

	Page
They are little affected with it, tho' it guards and keeps them — — —	111
They often make Providence an Argument to justify their Actions — — —	104
They are partial in viewing the Providence of God — — —	117

C H A P. XVIII.

Their Hypocrisy — — —	117
-----------------------	-----

C H A P. XIX.

Their Sabbath Sins — — —	122
By curtailing the LORD's-Day — — —	124
By neglecting to do all their Work on the six Days — — —	125
By gossiping away the Time — — —	ib.
By not discharging Works of Mercy as they ought — — —	ib.

C H A P. XX.

Their Miscarriages about Self-Examination — — —	127
Many never set about this Duty — — —	128
Not examining our Hearts by the Word — — —	129
We are too seldom in this Duty — — —	130
We grow weary of this Duty, before it be brought to any considerable Issue — — —	131
Some Considerations to enforce this Duty — — —	132
The sad Consequences of the Neglect of this Duty — — —	134

C H A P. XXI.

The Pride of many Professors of Religion — — —	136
They are apt to boast of any Good they do — — —	138
They are glad if others take Notice of them — — —	140
Few will confess their Faults to others — — —	ib.

The CONTENTES.

Page

C H A P. XXII.

Their Intemperance in Eating	—	142
They do not eat with an holy Fear of God	—	145
Not minding the Snares that are in their	—	147
Dishes	—	147

C H A P. XXIII.

Their Idleness	—	149
In their particular Callings	—	151
In their general Callings	—	152

C H A P. XXIV.

Their Unmercifulness	—	153
----------------------	---	-----

C H A P. XXV.

Their Unrighteousness, or Unfaithfulness in	—	155
Trading	—	155
Few trade in Fear, lest in getting an Estate	—	157
they lose God	—	157
They over-reach each other in the Price of	—	159
their Commodities	—	159
The Sin of Lying too common among Tra-	—	161
ders	—	161

C H A P. XXVI.

Their Covetousness	—	163
Their Cares for Riches	—	164
Covetousness deadneth us to the Worship of	—	166
God	—	166

C H A P. XXVII.

The Sins of Family-Governors	—	173
Not catechising their Families	—	174
Not allowing their Servants Time to worship	—	175
God	—	175

C H A P.

The CONTENTS.

CH A P. XXIX.

	Page
The Sins of Husbands and Wives	177
Jointly —	ib.
Severally —	178

CH A P. XXX.

The Miscarriages of Parents and Children	181
By setting bad Examples —	182
By not acquainting them with the LORD —	183
By not correcting them aright —	184

CH A P. XXXI.

The Sins of Masters and Servants	190
1. Of Masters towards their Servants	ib.
2. Of Servants to their Masters —	193

CH A P. XXXII.

Their Miscarriages with Reference to the Ministers of Christ —	197
Their Prejudice against them —	198
Their Excuses for not hearing them —	200

CH A P. XXXIII.

Want of Love among the Professors of Reli- gion —	210
By Back-biting one another —	212
Entertaining Reports, and aggravating Of- fences, of Brethren of different Persuasions —	213
Not praying for those that dissent from us —	217
By refusing to help them —	218

CH A P. XXXIV.

The Faults of Church - Members towards those of their particular Congregations —	225
---	-----

The CONTENTS.

Page

C H A P. XXXV.

Their Miscarriages towards Sinners	—	239
By not reproofing them	—	241
By keeping them Company they are hardened in their Wickedness	—	242

C H A P. XXXVI.

What Use the Professors of Religion should make of this Gospel-Glass	—	252
--	---	-----

C H A P. XXXVII.

The Conclusion. Some Motives to make Use thereof	—	265
--	---	-----

EXTRACT from Mr. Cowley's ESSAYS.

I. On Solitude	—	273
II. Of Greatness	—	278
III. The Danger of an honest Man in much Company	—	286
IV. The Shortness of Life, and Uncertainty of Riches	—	292
V. The Danger of Procrastination	—	297
<i>Epitaphium Viri Auctoris</i>	—	301

The End of the Thirty-third Volume.

The Contents.

C H A P. XXXV.

— 239	Their Misadvantages towards Sinners
— 241	By not reproving them
— 242	By keeping them Company they are hardened in their Wickedness

C H A P. XXXVI.

— 250	What Use the Professors of Religion should make of this Gospel-Glass
-------	--

C H A P. XXXVII.

— 262	The Conclusion. Some Motives to make Use thereof
-------	--

TRACT FOR 46 CYCLES

— 273	I. On Solitude
— 278	II. Of Ghosts
— 280	III. The Danger of an honest Man in such Company
— 282	IV. The Shortness of Life, and Uncertainty of Riches
— 287	V. The Danger of Procrastination
— 291	VI. The Danger of Neglect

